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TO SPRING.

BY C. D. SWIFT.

Green plains already smile with flow'rets bright,
While palpitating waves embrace the shore;
Unto their nests swift swallows wing their flight,
And from the trees the birds sweet carols pour.

Like some young mother, Earth all gaily dight,
Smiles at her teeming bosom's promised store,
While Love and Life breathe in each zephyr light,
And ev'ry heart with joy now floweth o'er.

O Spring, my country thou shalt view anew,
And with thy garlands bright her brow shalt grace,
Flow'rs on her breast and at her feet shalt strew!

Away with flow'rs! If on her servile brow
A laurel-wreath the Future cannot place,
Her crown of thorns becomes it better now!

A FLOWER OF FATE

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE WILD WARRINGTONS," "LIKE LOST SHEEP," ETC., ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER VI.

"YOUR ramble, I should say, has done you good, Flower," aunt Hannah observed, when, flushed and glad and just in time for tea, I got back to Moor Edge. "You certainly look better."

"I never was ill," I answered lightly.

"Still there's the brimstone-and-treacle on my mantelpiece up-stairs, if you like to try it," said she peevishly.

"'Throw physic to the dogs,' aunt Hannah!" laughed I, and took my place at the table.

Sunset faded into twilight; twilight died into night. The white summer moon sailed high over the moorland, and turned into fairy silver the dew upon the heather and gorse.

No sound ever so faintly came up to-night from the dim far-off valley Stonyhampton way; all nature seemed hushed and resting beneath the light of the clear summer moon.

Not without uneasiness, as bed-time drew near, did I notice that aunt Hannah looked wan and drawn about the lips, restless and strange about the eyes—sure signs, I was uncomfortably aware, that she was threatened with a nervous attack. I deemed it prudent to hasten our movements in an upward direction. Bed, I believed, was the best place for aunt Hannah—sleep might avert the catastrophe.

As we were going up-stairs, all being made safe below, my aunt in front, clutching her pink wrapper around her narrow shoulders and starting at every shadow cast by her candle and big flat candlestick, I following with my own small lamp, and wishing from the bottom of my heart that uncle Simon was at home—as we thus together, two silly frightened women, ascended the worn dark stairway, one of the cocks in the hen-house suddenly crew.

As everybody knows, the crowing of a cock after sunset, more particularly at night, is by no means an ordinary occurrence.

To superstitious people the sound is an uncanny one; and the harsh voice of the bird calling out in the dark and stilly hours before midnight is by some said to bode no good.

"There," shivered aunt Hannah, halting upon the landing and turning her gray twitching face towards me—"that means misfortune!"

"Oh, nonsense!" said I, in a tone that I strove hard to make valorous, in spite of the curious chill which seemed to strike straight into my heart.

"And—and perhaps death," shuddered my aunt, her voice scarcely audible. "Oh, there he goes again! Drat him—I wish I could wring his neck!"

"You can wring it to-morrow if you are still in the same mind," I remarked, with some petulance. "I do wish aunt Hannah, that you wouldn't try to frighten me out of my wits. You will make me as nervous as yourself."

"How wicked and unkind you are, Flower! I'm sure I don't try to frighten you; so for pity's sake don't go and get telling your uncle that story," whined she. "How can I help my infirmity? I wish I could. You don't know, girl—you don't know how I've been tried all the many long and dreadful years that I've lived in this house—— Flower," said my aunt, checking herself with a kind of jump, as if for the moment she had fancied that uncle Simon was behind her, "would you—would you mind just going out with the mop and pushing him off the porch? It's the game Tom, I know by the crow. He'd be quiet then; and—and I'll wait here for you at the top of the stairs."

"Yes, I should very much mind," I answered flatly. "For goodness sake, aunt Hannah, do not be so ridiculous! Draw the bed-clothes well over your head, and then you will not hear him."

I persuaded her to go to her room, and at her request remained with her whilst she got into bed. When I bent over her pillow to bestow my customary airy good-night kiss upon her forehead, I saw and indeed could feel that she was still shivering.

"Do you really believe, aunt," I inquired anxiously, "that you will be taken with 'the jumps' to-night?"

"Yes; I do really believe that I shall. I feel as I always do when they're coming on," was her uncheering reply. And the bedstead itself began to shake as I stood by it.

Fortunately recollecting my uncle Simon's recipe for this distressing malady, I said, "Wait a minute; I'll be back directly," and quitted the room.

From past experience I was pretty well certain that, had I suggested a jorum of hot grog as a preventive against the threatened attack, my aunt, with a sniff and a hurt air, would obstinately have refused to touch it, though hankering for it perhaps all the same.

So, saying nothing to her of my intention, I crept down—half fearfully, I own—to the kitchen cupboard by the fireplace. A rat was gnawing somewhere under the stairs; but dead Sally, the cat, unmindful of crickets, was asleep within the kitchen fender.

Out in the hen-house at intervals the game-cock continued to crow, doubtless mistaking the white moonlight for the ghostly dawn.

The water in the kettles was still hot; and I was soon again standing by my aunt Hannah's bedside.

"Here, aunt Hannah—drink this!"

"What is it, Flower?" said she, partly raising herself upon her elbow, and looking very lean and droll in her night-attire, her face being quite framed in a double row of large limp cap-frills.

"What uncle Simon himself always insists upon your having when you're nervous—hot whiskey-and-water."

For a wonder she was sincerely grateful to me, the potion coming thus unexpectedly. But she coughed and choked as she drank it, staring up at me with swimming eyes.

"Isn't it rather—rather strong?" she said meekly.

I confessed that it was very strong. "For I want you to go to sleep," said I honestly.

"I fancied," remarked aunt Hannah more comfortably, when the tumbler was empty, "whilst you were down-stairs just now, that I heard a step in the garden—like—like I did, you know a few nights ago. But of course I may have been deceived."

"Very likely; we will not talk about it," I said hurriedly. "Besides, Jack would have barked—trust him—if any one had been near the house."

"I often think," slowly went on my aunt, gazing upward at the low cracked ceiling as she lay flat on her back in the bed, "how easily anybody, if he had a mind to, could crawl up on the roof just at this part of the house—first by mounting the wall by the cowshed, then along the brewhouse tiles, and then on by the help o' the spouting to——"

"Pray do not encourage those horrid fancies at this time of night," I interrupted earnestly, "but try your hardest to go to sleep, aunt Hannah, and then perhaps you will wake up better to-morrow. I am sure I hope you will."

I turned the wick of her old-fashioned night-lamp to a more cheerful point, so dispelling one or two weird Witch of Endor-like shadows that had taken flickering shape upon ceiling and wall, and once more put my lips to her forehead; then, finally bidding her good night, I left her.

At last in my own room, I leaned out of a window and lifted my face to the starry sky. How exquisite, how still, how unspeakably beautiful was the sleeping world! That tiresome wakeful fowl in the yard was quiet now; the only sound that was any wise audible was the smothered grunt of a slumbering sow. A little frolicsome night-wind blew sweetly and crisply from the north-west.

Fondly I turned my eyes towards Garlands-on-the-Moor.

"My love—dear love," I murmured—"good night!"

* * * * * * *

Was I dreaming, or was I awake?

It must have been past midnight, for the waning moonlight lay in patches upon the floor of my room, when I started up in bed, listening acutely, convinced that some unusual noise had reached my sense of hearing. By degrees it had stirred my sleep-bound faculties, and I was now almost broadly awake.

At first I believed that I must beyond all question be dreaming—dreaming that thieves and cut-throats were perhaps upon the roof, aunt Hannah's uncomfortable talk hazily recurring to my memory—for the ceiling above my head was jarring in a peculiar manner, as if some one, stealthily yet heavily, were moving within the dark void of the roof itself.

For a while I was horribly frightened, and the palms of my hands and the soles of my feet grew moist with terror. Yet the next minute I was out of bed, hastily donned my clothes, and was vainly groping for a friendly match-box that of course in a moment of panic was nowhere to be found. Unlike aunt Hannah, I was not accustomed to burn a light throughout the night.

I had rushed to the conclusion that she was ill, and moving about the house; perhaps she wanted assistance and was unable to make me hear. But what on earth could she be doing in uncle Simon's garret?—for, now that I was thoroughly awake, and with wits alert, I knew that the strange sounds proceeded from the solitary and mysterious attic across the grim threshold of which I had never yet gone.

In despair abandoning my search for the matches, I swiftly but noiselessly opened my door and peeped cautiously out into the passage. If aunt Hannah should be walking in her sleep—and it was not impossible—one could not be too careful in one's movements in approaching her.

The pale moonbeams pouring in at the small stair-head window flooded the passage and the landing. Out here it was as light as day, but with a light more cold and "creepy" than that of any day.

Stealing along the passage way my heart thumping, I came, almost before I was aware of it, at a corner of the landing, upon the door of aunt Hannah's chamber. Kind Heaven protect me—I was wrong! Her door was shut; and, listening, I could hear my aunt, evidently in a deep sleep, snoring aloud in her bed.

Then it was not she, either well or ill, who was prowling about the house at this unearthly hour. Who then could it be?

Hark—yes! Some one or something was moving in the attic under the roof!

Was it a robber?

Had uncle Simon returned without warning, and much earlier than he had anticipated? And, if so, how had he managed to get into the house in spite of shuttered windows and barred doors? Why, moreover—and this to me was the strangest circumstance of all—had not Jack Sprat barked, as after nightfall he never failed to do at the slightest noise in the vicinity of Moor Edge? Had he growled and barked in that familiar unappeasable way of his, I was certain that I should have heard him directly, his barrel in the yard being so near to my window.

What ought I to do? It would be the worst of folly to awaken aunt Hannah. She would instantly be taken with her nervous disorder in its most alarming and serious form, and perhaps in the sudden terror of it all would die outright! On the other hand, inactivity on my part—and the precious moments were flying—might mean a violent death both for her and for me—two weak woman as we were, shut up with some desperate wretch in a lonely house like Moor Edge!

"Wh—ir—ir—r-r-r!" went the old eight-day clock in the kitchen down-stairs, and then struck one, jarring hideously upon the dead night-silence. And in the same instant I heard a key grate rustily in the garret door, the door itself open gently, close, and then a footstep upon the upper stairway, about to descend to the landing where I was.

Dumb, paralysed with fright, I fell back against the passage-wall, my arms extended behind me, my eyes wide, strained, unwillingly fascinated, fixed upon the dusky narrow stair-ladder which led up to that evil place. No moonlight touched the garret stairs; all those were in impenetrable gloom.

Had my life depended upon promptitude in flight, I could have stirred neither hand nor foot. I could only keep staring, in a voiceless agony of dread, upward at that flight of steep bare stairs which led to my uncle Simon's den.

It seems to take minutes in telling, but actually seconds only could have elapsed ere I dimly perceived advancing towards me the tall figure of a man—advancing with great care, and, like a blind man, feeling his way as he came.

Then from the ugly shadow he stepped into the beautiful moon-light; and a stifled shriek, partly of relief, partly of mingled wonderment and joy, broke from my dry lips.

The man was Daryl Darkwood!

He saw me, started—he was already very pale—came quickly forward, and sank upon one knee at my feet. Too startled yet to utter a word, I could only stand there petrified in amazement, with my quivering arms spread for support against the wall behind me.

"My darling, forgive me!" he whispered passionately. "I did not mean to disturb

or to alarm you; but I couldn't help it. I found the skylight in the roof unfastened—movable. It seems however that it closes with a singular kind of spring, and I was speedily made a prisoner. I struck a light, and luckily then found an old key, or——"

My heart was beginning to thaw, as it were. My tongue became loosened, and was once more my own.

"But—but, Mr. Darkwood," I gasped, "what is the meaning of this? What are you here at all for? It is—it is terribly wrong. Why, oh, why did you do it——",

"Flower, I love you!" he cried breathlessly. "I love you, and mean to save you from the desolate, unnatural life you are now living. Dearest, this house, believe me, is no place, no fit home for you. The people here have wickedly deceived you—you are nothing to them, are not of their kin. I am convinced of it from what I have heard about them and you in Stonyhampton and elsewhere. Yet, before making this known to you, I was resolved to ascertain the truth for myself—and to-night I have done it. It is very ugly truth; and Flower, you must quit this place—say adieu to it forever—the very hour that I can arrange for you to fly with me to a happier shelter. My darling, with me you will be safe. No one can take you from me, nor can in any wise harm you when once you are my wife."

"In pity," I whispered distractedly, "not so loud. You will awaken my aunt else, and that would be dreadful, dreadful, dreadful! Go—please go!"

"I will. But you must first solemnly promise me that you will be in the quarry to-morrow morning—nay, it is now morning—not later than eleven o'clock. I will explain everything to you then."

"Oh, I'll promise anything if you will only go," I moaned, almost sobbed, wringing my hands in an anguish of direst distress.

He sprang to his feet, and clasped me fondly in his arms. I was too weak and unnerved—indeed utterly powerless—to resist him in the least. I could only lie passive in his sustaining arms whilst he pressed his lips to mine.

"Farewell, beloved, for a few hours," he murmured. "Show me the best way of escape, and I am gone."

"The best way—the best way," I repeated dazedly to myself. Yes, yes, that would be it—the quickest and the best way.

"See, straight before you, down this passage," I explained feverishly, "is the door of my room. The window is exactly opposite to the door; the moor itself is, as you know, merely a few feet from the window-ledge. There is no better way than that. Oh, be quick, Mr. Darkwood, if you would be kind to me, and go!"

"Not until I have heard you say, 'Daryl, I love you!'"

It was—this extraordinary midnight encounter—but the fourth time in my life of seeing him. I, poor moth in the flame, obeyed him nevertheless.

"Daryl," I breathed, trembling exceedingly, "I—I love you."

"Periwinkle," he murmured back, caressing my head, "you are all the world to me, love. My pretty Flower, Heaven shield you and bless you."

Again did he strain me to his heart, his lips fixed upon mine; then, releasing me, he vanished down the moonlit passage; and I was alone.

* * * * * *

No more sleep or rest for me that night. My old life, as it were, had been suddenly wrecked.

Was I plunged in deep ocean, or about to touch the border-land of a glorious unknown world? Whither was I drifting, or rather being hastened? Where and how would it all end?

Was I deliriously happy or prodigiously scared? I did not know; I could not decide. The old Flower Creedy seemed to me gone, and I was changed into some one else.

CHAPTER VII.

I ROSE betimes to sit by my open window, and the fresh, pure air of early morning wrought me more good than anything else could have done.

It cooled my aching head and fevered eyes, and brought back to me the bodily vigor of which the excitement of the past night had robbed me.

Notwithstanding, at present steady and collected thought was a sheer impracticability; that must wait until the day was older and I had learnt more than I already knew of the mystery which brooded over Moor Edge.

I could not, would not yet think of that. A dispassionate view and reasoning of things must be put aside until I had again seen Daryl Darkwood.

Daryl! Daryl! I could think only of him, and not yet of uncle Simon, aunt Hannah and Moor Edge.

Whatever of evil there might be about my lone old home—and, having known no other, it had always seemed really like "home" to me—had never hitherto troubled me in any harmful way; and, therefore, the grim thought of it should not trouble now; at any rate, not for the present.

No; my thoughts in these early morning hours could only dwell, and dwell fondly, upon Daryl, my lover; that was enough.

So I watched the sun rise from the chill, lovely east, and the pallid dawn-mists roll silently away from the dips purple uplands of the breezy moor, dreaming, dreaming all the while of Daryl Darkwood.

Blithely the soaring lark shook the dew from his wings, telling the waking world that another day was come.

When I heard aunt Hannah astir below, opening doors and windows, and raking out the ashes from the kitchen grate, I arose quietly from my chair by the casement and went down-stairs to join her in her work.

I began to wonder whether in appearance I was at all changed from the Flower Creedy of the night before.

I suppose, though, there was no perceptible difference in me—at all events, to the eyes of my aunt Hannah—for when she looked at me and said good-morning, she made no observation whatever of a personal character.

She, I was glad to notice, looked better than usual; evidently a night's thorough rest had in every sense been beneficial to her.

"Did—did you sleep well, aunt, after all?" I ventured, as carelessly as I could speak, as I shook out and spread the cloth for breakfast and clattered the crockery upon the table.

"Sound as a roach!" answered she, quite cheerfully for her. "That grog you made, Flower, must have been very strong, I feel sure; and I wonder I have not a headache this morning—that I do!"

"I told you it was strong. I thought you needed it so," I struck in with a short forced laugh. "You did not want to hear that cock crowing all night, did you?

"No, indeed," shivered my aunt, as she poured the boiling water upon the tea. "I dare say you won't believe it, but my very marrow ran cold as it was."

Again I laughed a little absently, perhaps somewhat unfeelingly—for nothing in creation is more selfish than a new-born love, a great and an exultant love, and the crowding day-dreams which are born with it—and strolled to the open back-door.

Why, where was Jack? Why had he not, as was his wont, come scampering indoors, his stump of a tail quivering joyously, the moment he heard us moving in the house?

Bare-headed, I went out into the sunny court, and gazed up and down it and over the wall into the yard.

"Jack, Jack," I called—"little man, where are you?" And then I whistled for him.

But there was no glad bark in reply; no bristly little four-footed form came hurtling along the court in order to spring frantically upward into my arms, there to let its small coarse head nestle delightedly against my breast, and if possible to favor me with a swift "doggy" lick.

Where could he be, my dear little mongrel companion and friend? I ran to his barrel and looked into it.

A sharp cry burst from me. I fell upon my knees by the barrel's mouth. My tears had suddenly gushed forth and blinded me.

There upon his side on the straw—half, in, half out of his tub—he lay, my faithful "little man" that would never more answer to my merry call, never more wander with me over the wide and windy moor! His glassy eyes were partly open; his tongue, slightly frothy, hung from his jaws. His body, his limbs were cold and stiff in death—he lay stretched to his fullest length, which yet was barely that of a good-sized hare. My cry of bitter grief speedily brought out aunt Hannah.

"Is—is he dead?" said she turning very white.

"Yes—dead!" was all I could say.

Aunt Hannah stooped over the little dead dog, and warily examined the hanging tongue. Then she looked up at me. In an awe-stricken voice she said—

"It must have happened last night when the game-cock was crowing. He has been poisoned—that's plain! And who—who can have done it, I wonder? Oh, Flower," whined she, "didn't I say that misfortune was coming? And now—and now, depend upon it, there's worse behind!"

* * * * *

"My dear one, do not, oh, do not cry so piteously. It is terrible for me to see you. Take heart, Flower. In a little while hence you will be far away from that dismal place yonder. We shall be always together, in a purer atmosphere—morally purer, you know, I mean—with no cares, no troubles, and as happy as the day is long."

"It is so—so much to have lost in a single day—at a single blow," I sobbed, although Daryl's dear arms were holding me as we sat together upon the grass-grown quarry stones, and Heaven's own fair radiant sky was overhead. "Faith—one's utter faith in one's nearest and best—shattered at a single blow, and——"

"Now do not any longer call that old vil—that old man your 'nearest and best,' Flower. I tell you that he is nothing to you; I am thoroughly convinced of it; nor are you aught to him. He is an outcast, a pariah, a kind of leper—what you will—that is all the world over shunned by his fellow-men. Moor Edge, as I tried to make you comprehend last night, is no fit abode for you, my darling. It is an accursed house—haunted, be sure, by many a ghost, if ghosts of the poor dead there be. You must by and by forget that you ever lived there, that you ever called it home."

"That will be impossible. I have known no home but that; and—and uncle Simon has been—has always been so good to me. I owe him so much—everything indeed."

"You owe him nothing. Whatever he may have done, my dear little girl, rest well assured he has done it in the way of atonement—having so wickedly wronged you. And, Flower," said my lover, almost sternly, "do not any more, I beg you, speak of him as 'uncle Simon.' I do not like it—cannot bear to hear it. I have a sensitive ear, Flower, and 'uncle Simon' grates upon it painfully."

I sighed heavily, wearily, and could not stem the flood of my tears.

"Then—then there is Jack," wept I, "my dear little dog. Oh, I loved him so—I loved him so. He too is gone—everything is gone."

"Come, are not you a trifle childish, darling?" said Daryl half gently, half playfully. "Jack, after all, was only a dog, and, forgive me, Flower, a precious ugly and, I think, dangerous one."

"Ah, but he was so faithful," I managed to say.

"No doubt. But some one, I dare say, with intent to destroy stoats and other vermin, had been throwing poisoned flesh about," answered Daryl.

"I—I don't know. I wish I did," said I sadly.

Talking in a light and tender vein, Daryl did his best to soothe and to comfort me—to encourage, to brace me, as it were, for the ordeal that was ahead of me.

And I was with him, his arms were around me, his shoulder was my aching head's sweet resting place; and so my grief over the unalterable past, and my vague nervous quailing from a shadowy and an unknown future were alike assuaged by his nearness, his touch, his dear companionship, which soon would be a constant joy that was never more to be taken away.

My lover on that morning, since I had joined him in our sheltered trysting-place, had told me many strange and disquieting things, explaining also his startling appearance at Moor Edge in the dead of the past night.

He declared to me that he had felt that he could not rest until with his own eyes he had beheld the interior of Simon Creedy's garret.

He had heard from the folk at Garlands and from other gossips in Stonyhampton what the place was said to contain—what gruesome secrets were believed to be hidden from the light of day in that attic under the roof; but, before in any manner venturing to influence me in the taking of the serious step which must for ever cut me off from uncle Simon and his guardianship, he wished, he said, to make quite certain that rumor for once was correct. When all doubt upon the point was thoroughly set at rest, then no time should be lost in persuading me to fly with him, thenceforward to turn my back upon the evil abode.

As there appeared to be not the remotest chance of his—Daryl Darkwood's—entering the house by fair means, why, he must—so he reasoned—have recourse to means that were not exactly fair.

He described to me how simple a matter it was to scale the walls and roof of Moor Edge—remarkably simple to a skilful climber—how he had found the skylight in the roof ajar—he supposed for ventilation's sake—and had at once carefully lowered himself into the small and stuffy den beneath it.

To his horror, the skylight had closed with a spring, the secret of which he had been unable to detect, and there was he in the roof of Moor Edge, a prisoner, caught like a rat in a trap, laughed my lover—"As I told you, my dear one, last night," added he.

"But—but was it not very—very dark and horrible up there?" I faltered.

"Dark enough, in all conscience! However, I had with me a box of wax-lights; and there was, as you know, the cold white moonlight besides. White and weird as it was, it was nevertheless sufficient to show me—what I saw."

"Oh, Daryl," I whispered, womanlike kindling with curiosity, notwithstanding my sorrow and uneasiness, "what did you see? Remember, I was never in the attic in my life."

"I saw, Flower," was the grim reply, "plain tokens of—well, the hideous proofs of the old man's guilt."

"And they were——" breathed I.

"My dear," said Daryl earnestly, "I do not want to frighten you and you must have patience. After we are married you shall learn everything, or at any rate as much as I know myself. Let it be enough now—as I have before said—that I consider Moor Edge no fit home for you; and you must exchange it for the best, my own dear one, that it is within my power to give you."

"I shudder to imagine," I said, clinging to him, "what might have happened last night had you not so luckily found the rusty old key——"

"Oh, well, in that case I should have stamped and shouted for assistance!" threw in Mr. Darkwood lightly.

"Then, as surely as we are alive, you would have been the death of aunt Hannah," I told him solemnly.

"And I should have gone raving mad, Flower, had I for a bare quarter of an hour been kept a prisoner in that foul hole of Simon Creedy's. Good Heaven, dear, what a lively household we should then have been."

"Oh, pray do not jest about," I entreated. "It would have been all so real and so awful if—if it had happened."

And I shuddered again at the mere idea.

"One can always jest about the unknown," said Daryl Darkwood.

And then he went on to break to me what it was that the Stonyhampton gossips and the people at Garlands-on-the-Moor could tell about me—concerning me, Flower Creedy, as I was called; though, being so friendless, so completely alone, I myself had never heard the story.

I had, so it now appeared, quite sixteen years or more before, been brought home by my uncle Simon to Moor Edge, to his lone house upon the moor, which then, as now, was kept for him by his sister Hannah.

Taking, as usual, the black bag with him, he had one day set out upon one of his mysterious journeys—Londonwards, it was thought; and after an absence of nearly a week he had reappeared, at Moor Edge, on this occasion accompanied by a little child, a pretty little toddling dark-eyed mite of almost three years, who he gave out was the orphan daughter of a brother lately dead.

Nobody, however, at the time, or since, had believed the statement; for in the neighborhood it was tolerably well known to be a fact that Simon Creedy had no near relatives above ground save his scraggy sister Hannah, who lived with him at Moor Edge.

I was that little child, who had been brought so quietly no one knew whence, and reared in loneliness and the vigorous moorland air as the niece of Simon Creedy.

Hence, I suppose, the disagreeable curiosity my appearance never failed to excite whenever I had accompanied aunt Hannah into Stonyhampton.

For was not I a creature of mystery? And was not Moor Edge, where I lived, a house, as it were, under a ban?

More than this indeed that day Daryl Darkwood revealed to me; but I now cannot recollect what were his exact words, being at the time so bewildered, so unhappy, and yet, withal, so happy too. Verily, as some people say, my brain on that day was "in a whirl."

There was one thing my lover impressed vehemently upon me, forced me to comprehend, and that was the wisdom of getting our flight well managed and over before Simon Creedy should return to Moor Edge.

"There will then be nothing unpleasant for anybody," said Daryl with energy; "and it is quite as well perhaps that I and the old ruffian should not meet."

"Do you think it is likely that he will pursue us when he discovers that I am gone," I suggested timidly, "like—like Pharaoh after the Israelites and try to take me away from you? Oh, Daryl, that would be dreadful."

"Not he, Flower. If we could be here, ourselves unseen, when the blow falls, we should see his acceptance of the situation without a murmur. I would wager anything I possess that no one knows better than himself that he—Simon Creedy—has no right, no claim to you, my darling Flower."

A feeling of intense remorse seemed all at once to overpower me.

"Oh, Daryl," I cried once more, again bursting into tears, "he has been so good to me—so kind, so good in every way as far as he could! It seems such—such terrible ingratitude to—to—— Oh, surely you can tell me something more, enlighten me further," I cried piteously—"can tell me why it is wrong for me to—to care for him: I—I mean, what great wickedness he has committed, in what way his life is so bad that I should shrink from him, leave him without a word, after all—after all——"

"What," interrupted my lover, with a sort of masterful tenderness in his low and clear voice, "has it come to this? Oh, Flower, I am disappointed in you! You hesitate to believe in me—hesitate to trust me—hesitate when I have told you the plain truth—that Moor Edge is not a fit home for you, that the man you have learnt to call 'uncle Simon' is no proper guardian for you—a young, sweet, and innocent girl like you, Flower! I thought you were brave—not a coward, dear," he said, with gentle reproach. "I thought you understood that a crisis in your life has arrived, and that the time is now at hand when you must choose between Simon Creedy and me!"

Kind Heaven, help me, guide me in my innocence and ignorance! No need to say—being a foolish woman in the ecstasy of a first love—that I chose and blindly clung to Daryl Darkwood.

CHAPTER VIII.

WHEN we—Daryl Darkwood and I—parted on that morning, our plans for the immediate future were mapped out and settled. What had to be done must be done promptly, he reiterated; there was no time to be lost.

Yet I did not altogether comprehend why there should be so much haste in the matter, uncle Simon—as I still could not help calling him in my own thoughts, if not aloud—would not return to Moor Edge for several days to come; and then—and then it was most delightful being made love to out of doors upon the moor, with the warm sun and blue sky overhead, the sweet wild northern breeze all around us, and the mossy turf and the heather as a carpet for our feet.

It was a time, halcyon and all too fleeting, that I knew instinctively never could come again. Why then be in such haste to cut it short? However, my lover, I supposed, knew best; and my whole love and trust were now given to him.

So, like one moving in a dream, I went back to the solitary house which for so long had been my home, but which thenceforward was to be my home never more.

Daryl had been both careful and patient in making me understand all that I was to do. I was to keep a brave heart, he said, and to forget nothing that he had told me to remember.

For himself, he hastened home to Garlands-on-the-Moor. He had, of course, a good deal to do—much to see to and arrange with regard to our flight, which

was to take place even so early as at dawn on the following day. We should not meet again until then.

He had to settle in a pecuniary way with the people at Garlands, and naturally to pay them as much as they should in reason demand of him in consideration of his so hurriedly quitting the farm-house after leading its inmates to expect that he would remain there as their lodger for the whole of the summer.

Then there were his things to pack; I mean not only his clothes, his easels, his pictures, his paint boxes, and the many other chattels appertaining to his delightful calling.

This done, he would drive with his luggage to Stonyhampton, and thence take the train to Northminster, where he would make all needful preparations for our marriage on the next day.

In that sleepy, ancient city, Daryl said, we could be married before a registrar, for at Northminster neither of us was known; whereas, if the ceremony were performed at the registrar's office in Stonyhampton, the proceeding might create much impertinent curiosity, which, of course, in a case like ours, was better avoided.

Northminster was no very great distance from our market-town—scarcely fifteen miles, I fancy.

At daybreak Mr. Darkwood would contrive to be at my window, and I must be ready; for waiting for us upon the moor behind the outbuildings there would be a vehicle of some kind, in which we could at once drive off.

I was to take nothing with me from Moor Edge beyond those things which were absolutely necessary—as the garments, for instance in which I stood upright—because all that I possessed in the world had been bought with Simon Creedy's money; and that, declared Daryl Darkwood proudly, was accursed money.

Aught that I might want he himself would buy for me, either in Northminster or in London, or even, should I prefer it, in Paris—for to Paris were we going after spending a few days in the English capital.

So no wonder my brain "whirled," and I barely knew whether I was dreaming or awake.

All the same, I had pleaded for my books—the few books I loved as I had loved my faithful little cur. I had had so little to love.

Must I lose them too? Must they also go, those wise and silent companions? Must every vestige of the old tranquil and lonely life, then, be made to disappear?

Yes, it seemed so; for, although Daryl had answered me in a playful and smiling manner, there was yet in that agreeable manner of his something more than a spice of unyielding masterfulness.

Young and inexperienced as I was, knowing naught of men and their ways, that gleam of tyranny, faint as it was, in the nature of Daryl Darkwood was at any rate not lost upon my perception.

"No, Periwinkle, said he, "Did not Simon Creedy likewise buy the books? leave them behind with the rest; besides, they'll be in the way. I repeat, what you want in the future your husband himself will see that you do not lack. You are mine; you belong to me now; you must look to me for everything."

What could I do but yield to him entirely? He knew best.

Notwithstanding, when we said good-bye, I had whispered, as he held me to his heart, with my arms lying around his neck—

"And—and after we are married—will you not, Daryl?—you will try to find out who I—who I really am—who—what she is that you have made your wife? You will not let me forever live—live as it were under a cloud? For your own sake—for mine—you will do this, Daryl?"

And with passionate assurances of his unchanging love, he promised me that he would.

"We will tackle Simon Creedy himself," said Daryl lightly and fondly, "after the honeymoon—shall we? The secret, we may be sure, lies with him."

And so, like a woman moving in a dream, I say, I went slowly back to Moor Edge. Dinner I found was ready and waiting, aunt Hannah, because I was ten minutes or so late, "as cross"—in her own phraseology—"as two sticks."

I looked at her dreamily, curiously, wonderingly; and it was really a marvel that I did not utter my thoughts aloud! And so, I was insensibly thinking, this lean angular woman with the sharp colorless face—colorless save for the frost-bitten nose-tip—and nervous shifting eyes, with the dirty pink wrapper and shrimp frill-less gown, was not my aunt after all! How odd, how very queer, to be sure! Did she as well as her brother know the true history of my birth, my parentage? And how much, I wondered, could she reveal if she chose?

Ah, well, as my lover said, I must have patience! Every instant I thought, as I had thought at breakfast, that she would make some remark or other either on my appearance or on my behavior; for I somehow felt that I could not possibly be looking and acting as I had hitherto been accustomed to look and to act, now that so delicious and so solemn a secret was locked away within my own breast. Indeed I trembled every instant lest by some sudden unguarded word or action I should betray myself, should lay bare my precious secret before those small and shifting eyes of my aunt Hannah.

But, with extraordinarily good appetite for her, she was eating her boiled pork and peas—a by-no-means unfamiliar dinner with us at Moor Edge in the summer-time—and looked up by-and-by to observe—

"You don't eat a morsel, Flower. Ain't you hungry?"

With an effort therefore I roused myself, and made a pretence of eating a little, though in reality on that day I had not the smallest appetite for the homely fare upon our table.

It was the last dinner which I should ever sit down to beneath that roof; yet, all the same, I could swallow no particle of it. Somehow it seemed to me then that I should never be hungry again!

* * * * * *

Within the shadow of the cob-nut trees which grew upon the south side of the garden, where merely the low and rather broken stone wall divided the garden itself from the wide purple moorland, I buried Jack Sprat—my small dumb mongrel friend with the faithful brown eyes.

Need I say that it was a most sorrowful task, and that my tears fell fast upon the little grave?

However, it was done at last; and I raised my head suddenly to see standing there on the other side of the low stone wall a youthful intruder who was intently regarding me.

He was a poorly-clad lad with a hungry look; and in a moment I perceived that he was no moorland-bred boy—plainly a pallid urchin from the back-streets of Stonyhampton.

"What are you doing here?" I demanded rather sharply.

"If you are the young lady, miss, as lives at Moor Edge, I was to give you this," said he.

And from a pocket in his tattered jacket he drew out a large square envelope with something painted on it.

It could, I of course knew, come from no one but Daryl Darkwood; and I leaned immediately with outstretched hand over the broken wall, eager to possess the missive, whatever it might be.

"I met the gentleman on his way to the station, miss," explained the boy; "and he said I was to be sure and wait about the place till I see you."

I had a sixpence and a few half-pence in my pocket, all of which I joyfully bestowed upon the messenger; he should have had more—three times as much—had I had more with me at the time to give; and then I bade him hurry away in order that I might be alone—alone with my wonderful luck.

The pallid waif scampered off well pleased, doubtless not having reckoned upon being paid at both ends of the journey.

Once more by myself, and with no one to watch me, in a flutter of joy that was almost pain I prepared to read what I thought was to be my first love-letter.

There was no address upon the large square envelope, only the word "Periwinkle," in fanciful letters of pale-blue and olive-green painted across it from a top corner to a bottom one.

With eager, trembling fingers, yet with a touch of reverent care, I broke the seal and peeped in at my treasure. But there was no love-letter.

What then could it be?

Ah, something as sweet, if not sweeter, for it was Daryl himself—his photograph. There was the handsome faultless pale features, the heavy moustache, as in life, hiding a perfect mouth, the wide white forehead and dark wavy hair, and Daryl's own wondrous beautiful dark eyes gazing gravely, yet smiling a little, upward into mine. It was a marvellous, a most eloquent likeness; and I kissed it a hundred times.

With the photograph there had come a clever little sketch, even my untutored eye could perceive, upon rough drawing paper and in great haste—the hurried sketch of a girl in a washed-out blue-muslin gown, with blue ribbons knotted loosely about her neck and hat, and with long sprays of the periwinkle plant adorning in dusky fantastic fashion, her person as well.

The girl's hair was soft and sombre as the purple-black wing of a young raven; her heavily-lashed eyes, looking straight at one with a questioning serious air, were as clear and as blue as the periwinkle flower itself.

Perhaps the face in contour was a trifle thin, the lips in expression a little sad; notwithstanding—being by nature neither stupid nor blind—I knew it was a lovely and unidealized portrait, the genuinely healthful hue of the fair young face being unquestionably the greatest charm to be found in it.

"Oh, Daryl," was the silent glad cry in my heart, "how you must love me, my darling, my darling, to paint me so faithfully from memory—in absence to remember me so well."

And—yes!—on another scrap of paper there was a line or so of writing too. After all, then, it was really and truly a love-letter.

The written words however which my eyes devoured were merely—

"Beloved, farewell until dawn to-morrow. I send the enclosed to you, my lovely Flower, so that you may know that you are not forgotten by, but are ever present in the tenderest thoughts of,

"Your own "DARYL DARKWOOD."

With these dear words and the photograph pressed to my lips, I raised my eyes mutely to the high summer sky, and thanked Heaven thus for so brave a lover.

CHAPTER IX.

TO all my favorite haunts I had said good-bye; nor did I forget the pigs, the poultry, Daffodil and Daisy, or the deaf and aged Sally upon the kitchen hearth.

Also had I paid my last visit to, wept my last tears over, my little dog's grave under the nut-boughs in the garden. Yes, to all then around me I had whispered that simple yet often heart-breaking word "Good-bye." Good-bye for a brief while only is sometimes bad and sad enough in all conscience; but, when it comes to good-bye for evermore—for evermore upon this side of eternity—then it is a wrench indeed! At least I know that it is so if one's poor human heart has taken, as it were, root in the soil where the inevitable farewell must be said.

There was only aunt Hannah now; and, as for uncle Simon——. But I must not, I dared not think of him.

And so, when bed-time came, hardly knowing what I was about to do or say, I fell upon aunt Hannah's bony shoulder and hid my face in the grimy pink wrapper.

So clinging to her, I sobbed out my farewell. Aloud, in tones husky and choked, it was "Good night;" under my breath it was "Good-bye!"

She was evidently very much astonished at this unwonted display of emotion on my part; and I have no doubt the circumstance recurred to her vividly enough afterwards.

"Why, bless me, Flower, child," said she, more kindly than she generally spoke, "what's the matter with you? You don't feel nervous, I hope—jumpy, or—or—or anything like that, do you?" added aunt Hannah anxiously.

"No, no, no! I am weak and silly—nothing more," I stammered, quickly drying my eyes. "You see, I—I—I cannot help thinking of poor Jack. I shall miss him so—so terribly: and—and——"

"Oh, that's it, is it?" said aunt Hannah, in a relieved tone. "Well, it is silly to cry about it, Flower, though I must confess that it made me feel a bit shaky this morning when I saw him stretched out there on the straw in his tub; and—and I do trust his death, being—being poisoned and all—don't mean misfortune of any kind," said she, shivering and looking scared.

Unable to bear more or to say more just then, I slipped from aunt Hannah's stiff and queer but kindly-meant embrace, fled to my own room, locked the door, and there in a passion of weeping flung myself upon the bed.

Yet, all the while I was conscious that I was, in spite of everything, deliriously happy; for Daryl Darkwood's picture—his own likeness—was lying next to my heart.

* * * * * * *

From sheer exhaustion and worn out with excitement, I must, I suppose, all dressed as I was, have quickly fallen asleep, and slept, too, soundly. And as the night wore on I dreamed a frightful dream.

I thought that without warning uncle Simon had returned to Moor Edge, looking stern and menacing and altogether unlike the benign old man I knew, to accuse me the moment we met of base ingratitude and lack of natural feeling.

He seemed to be aware that I was flying from Moor Edge and from the vague horror that brooded over the lonely house, because he said, whilst his face grew wan with anger, and a steel-like glitter crept into his eyes, that my conduct was unpardonable and more cruel than a "serpent's tooth." He dropped his hands upon my shoulders, and his wiry grip was like the clutch of a skeleton.

Dumb with despair and fright, I sank at his feet, and noticed then that he had the black bag with him. He caught it up as if struck by a swift idea; and something in his pale evil look made me gasp out—

"Are you going to kill me?"

And he answered quite quietly—

"Yes—living, you shall never leave Moor Edge—never take the secret with you. One day, some day—who knows?—it may be my fortune. So I will stifle the life out of you with my black bag."

And in the next instant he was kneeling upon my chest, holding me down thus, with the black bag pressed heavily over my mouth and nostrils.

The horrid thing had a loathsome, death-like smell, and I struggled frantically to thrust it from my face. Vain! The agony of a violent end was stealing over me; the voice of my uncle Simon was humming in my ears.

"Flower," it said—"good-bye, Flower. I will bury you in the attic with the others—at least there will be ghosts ever present to keep you company—such ghosts, dear!—and then you can haunt the attic too. Flower—poor Flower—to die so early! Flower——"

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

WHEN the son of a certain London banker had eloped to Scotland with a great heiress whom he married, still retaining a paternal taste for parsimony, he objected to the demand of two guineas made by the priest at Gretna Green, stating that Captain —— had reported the canonical charge to be only five shillings. "True," replied Vulcan, "but Captain —— is an Irishman, and I have married him five times; so I consider him as a regular customer; whereas, I may never see your face again."

AN ASTHMATIC resident of Frankfort, Ky., took the advice of a friend who suggested that small doses of shot would relieve him. He kept on, however, until he had charged himself with four pounds of bird shot, and had to be put under the influence of morphine on account of the lead poisoning pains, and is now likely to go off any day.

Bric-a-Brac.

NEGRO BELIEFS.—Among the negroes the moaning dove moans to save a man's soul. To kill one of these doves is a sign of death, but more frequently of the death of a child. A buzzard or a crow on a housetop is believed by the same people to be an invariable sign of death or disaster; a visit at the door from a rooster, the approaching visit of a friend; the noise of the screeching owl, or "shivering" owl, is a bad omen of many interpretations; while, if the common owl hoots on your right, good luck will follow, but bad luck should he take up his position on the left and hoot therefrom.

EARTHQUAKES.—The most severe earthquakes on record have taken place in February. At Lisbon, February 26, 1531, 15000 houses were destroyed by an earthquake, and 30,000 persons buried in the ruins. On February 2, 1703, 5000 thousand lives were lost by an earthquake at Aquila, in Italy. On February 5, 1783, a terrible earthquake took place in Italy and Sicily, destroying thousands of lives and overthrowing Messina and other towns. On February 4, 1797, an earthquake destroyed the whole country between Santa Fé and Panama, including Cusco and Quito; and it is estimated on this occasion 40,000 people were buried in one second.

KING SOLOMON'S DEVICE FAILS.—A habeas corpus case was brought before a Georgia court for trial lately for the possession of a colored baby. There was an able array of counsel for both claimants. Both sides proved so much that the judge was in doubt about who really was the right owner of the child. Bethinking himself of a Bible precedent, the judge proceeded to grasp the baby by the leg, reached down into his girdle and pulled out his bowie knife and proposed to do the square thing by the claimants by slicing the baby in two. Both claimants, thinking the judge had a right to divide the baby, rushed frantically up to him, saying: "Boss, don't kill him. You may have him!"

EARLY WRITING.—In the shepherd state of society they wrote their songs with thorns and awls on straps of leather, which they wound around their crooks. The Icelanders appear to have scratched their "runes," a kind of hieroglyphics, on walls, and one worthy, according to a Saga, built a large house on the balks and spars of which he had engraved the history of his own and more ancient times; while another northern hero appears to have had nothbetter than his own chair and bed to perpetuate his own heroic acts on. At the town hall, in Hanover, Germany, are kept twelve wooden boards overlaid with bees' wax, on which are written the names of owners of houses, but not the names of streets. These "wooden manuscripts" must have existed before 1423.

THE CORSET.—Napoleon Bonaparte said to Dr. Corvisart, speaking of the corset:—"This wear, born of coquetry and bad taste, which murders women and ill-treats their off-spring, tells of frivolous tastes, and warns me of an approaching decadence." Joseph II. of Austria was very severe upon the corset, and made a law confining its use to abandoned women. The last King of France embodied his opinion of this abomination in this stinging epigram: "Once you met Dianas, Venuses, or Niobes; nowadays only wasps." The great naturalist, Cuvier, was walking one day with a young lady who was a victim of tight lacing, in a public garden in Paris. A lovely blossom upon an elegant plant drew from her an expression of admiration. Looking at her pale, thin face, Cuvier said, "You were like this flower once; to-morrow it will be as you are now." Next day he led her to the same spot, and the beautiful flower was dying. She asked the cause. "This plant," replied Cuvier, "is an image of yourself. I will show you what is the matter with it." He pointed to a cord bound tightly around the stem, and said, "You are fading away in exactly the same manner under the compression of your corset, and you are losing by degrees all your youthful charms, just because you have not the courage to resist this dangerous fashion."

PLENTY OF LANGUAGE.—If a Chinese is asked how he finds himself in health? He answers, "Very well; thanks to your abundant felicity." If they would tell a man that he looks well, they say, "Prosperity is painted on your face; or, Your air announces your happiness." If you render them any service, they say, "My thanks shall be immortal." If you praise them, they answer, "How shall I dare to persuade myself of what you say of me?" If you dine with them, they tell you at parting, "We have not treated you with sufficient distinction." The various titles they invent for each other it would be impossible to translate. It is to be observed that all these answers are prescribed by the Chinese ritual, or Academy of Compliments. There, are determined the number of bows; the expressions to be employed; the genuflexions, and the inclinations which are to be made to the right or left hand; the salutations of the master before the chair where the stranger is to be seated, for he salutes it most profoundly, and wipes the dust away with the skirts of his robe; all these and other things are noticed, even to the silent gestures by which you are entreated to enter the house. The lower class of people are equally nice in these punctilios; and ambassadors pass forty days in practising them before they are enabled to appear at court.

OLD MEMORIES.

BY ELEANOR KINA HARE.

She was singing, oh, so sweetly!
Ev'ry note and sad refrain
With their clear and true vibration
Thrilled my heart and soul again.
Ev'ry word awoke an answer—
Do you, can you question why?
Twenty years ago, beloved,
I had heard that melody.

In a moment I could fancy
That among the yellow broom,
Like a row of sentries, standing
Were the old firs in the gloom.
I could picture in the distance
How beneath the arching trees
You were list'ning in the shadow
To the hum of noisy bees.

Yester evening she was singing
That old song of long ago,
And I saw familiar faces
That I love and long for so.
If you wonder, if you question
Why I love that sad refrain—
Do you ever dream of hours
That ne'er come back again?

LIGHT AT LAST.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "A BROKEN WEDDING RING," "THORNS AND BLOSSOMS," "WHICH LOVED HIM BEST?" ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XVI.

"THERE—it is in its right place, Mab—my Mab!" he said fondly. "Oh, I am truly the most fortunate man in the world! I think I should die now, Mab, if I lost the hope of calling you my own. Look up, dearest, and tell me that you consent to wear the gage of our betrothal!"

"How can I refuse, Neville, when you have said such dear words to me? Yes, I will keep the ring! I will try to believe what you and Dick believe?."

Rapturously he kissed her fair cheek and the hand which bore his pearls, and into her youthful soul stole a delicious joy, an ineffable happiness.

"Oh, Mab, you have made me so happy—so supremely happy, darling!" he murmured, as they sat under the cedar-tree, forgetful for the moment of all the world but each other.

It was arranged that Mabel's bridal day should be her eighteenth birthday. This was decided before Lord Wynmore bade his fiancee good night late on that glowing summer evening; and before he went he wrung from her a promise that she would not dwell upon any disquieting thoughts. She was to dismiss the past, and look forward to the future. And Mab believed that she would be able to keep her promise.

Her father that evening seemed to be possessed by the spirit of gay good humor, while uncle John forgot to find fault, and Caroline smiled almost as she used to smile before that journey to London which had so quieted and changed her. Dick was radiant—he and Neville were already brothers in heart.

When all the household was hushed in sleep, Mabel sat writing the wonderful news to her young sisters and to Miss Gray. She wished to tell them herself, she said, and she could not rest till she had written to Netta and Bella. Then she looked out at the summer stars, and said softly—

"Good night, Neville—good night, beloved!"

Two days later it was announced in all the leading newspapers that a marriage had been arranged, and would take place in the course of little more than a year, between Viscount Wynmore, of Wynmore Manor, and of Pine-Forest, North Britain, and Mabel Alvina, second daughter of Richard James Charlford, Esq., of Charlford House, Surrey, and of Grosvenor Gardens, London. The announcement concluded with the statement that "the marriage was deferred only on account of the youth of the bride-elect."

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Mab had accepted the happiness which had been held out to her—accepted it, however, with timorous uncertainty, as if she feared that it would be quickly taken from her; for all the while an uneasy feeling of trouble lurked in her heart—a secret questioning as to whether the things she would fain believe were indeed true.

But she had agreed to wed her noble adoring lover; she had brought back joy to his soul in consenting to be his; it was impossible that she should now refuse. No—for weal or woe she must go forward; she prayed Heaven that it might not be for woe. In about one short year she was to be married—she, Mabel Charlford, whom no one save Dick had ever thought much of—she was to be Viscountess Wynmore of Wynmore Manor. It almost frightened her to think what wealth and honors would be hers, but the feelings contending in her heart blotted out this more trivial one.

She loved Neville with entire devotion; along with this however mingled recollection of the belief which she could not quite shake off, that there was some foundation for all the miserable dread which had haunted her in so cruel a manner for a short space of her life.

But to ordinary eyes there was no cloud upon her radiant horizon; and indeed many were the hours when the deep delight of possessing Neville's love effaced even *fear* itself. She loved him, and he worshipped her—could she ask more of Heaven? Ah, yes, she did pray earnestly for one thing more—that she might never be the innocent means of linking a tarnished name to that one of untainted nobility, the name of Wynmore!

Already life had completely changed for her. She was no longer the unconsidered girl still in the schoolroom, who always had to defer to her elder sister. Her future high position placed her first in everybody's eyes; the servants assumed a more obsequious tone when they addressed her; she was no longer under Miss Gray's supervision.

Caroline never reproved her for anything; Netta and Bella offered to do anything they could to spare her any trouble; and, as for her father, he showed by unmistakable signs that she was in high favor with him.

The visitors at the house too paid her deference as to a future great personage. Dick was the only one entirely unchanged towards her.

She saw Neville every day while they were in London, and uncle John sent her and Dick a most flattering and courteous invitation when Mr. Charlford and his family returned to the country—indeed it was couched in such pressing and affectionate terms that Mabel consented to go for a fortnight—days which were full of sunshine for every day Neville rode from the Manor to pass the hours by her side.

Mabel was almost sorry when she bade adieu to uncle John, so agreeable had he made himself, so much had he done to efface former painful impressions.

When Dick and his sister reached home, they learned that their father had gone to London—an ordinary occurrence of which no one thought anything.

"Mr. Charlford asked me to say, ma'am, that he did not think he could return to-night, and that no one was to sit up for him. If he gets back, he will let himself in with his own key," said the butler, addressing Mabel, though Caroline stood by. "And, if you please, sir," added the man, looking at Dick, "here is a note from the Rectory, which was to be given you immediately you came home."

Dick tore open the envelope, and almost immediately uttered an exclamation of dismay.

"Mab, I must go to the Rectory to-night. I am so sorry! But they have a dinner-party, and two men who were expected have suddenly failed them, so they want me to fill an awkward gap."

"Yes, you must go; but I am very sorry, Dick. Don't you remember we were to have gone together to hear the nightingales sing? However, we will go to-morrow," she added. "To-night I will run only to the summer-house and listen for ten minutes. There is sure to be a nightingale singing in the shrubbery."

Mr. Charlford and Dick being both absent, Miss Gray, with Netta and Bella, joined Caroline and Mabel at dinner, and they were all merry save Caroline, who had never been merry since her accident; but even she smiled now and then.

After dinner, when Netta and Bella were playing a game of bezique, and Miss Gray was talking to Caroline, the windows being all wide open, Mab passed out softly on to the lawn.

It was a lovely summer night. No stars were visible, but a luminous twilight pervaded the landscape, as if dawn were at hand.

The warmth was most pleasant, the air sweet with the odors wafted from many blossoms.

A sense of peace and security, a feeling as if at last she might dare to indulge in the joy which promised to crown her life, stole over the young girl.

Then her heart flew to Neville, her betrothed, as if he, though separated from her, would divine her joy.

In a happy dream she went on towards the arbor, walking in the shadows over the lawn.

When within sight of the summer-house she paused and looked up at the sky, listening all the while for a nightingale; but everything was strangely still. All at once she caught sight of a figure moving along the greensward toward the arbor.

"It must be Dick," she thought—"Dick come here to see if I should be out! But how early he has returned! Certainly the Rectory people are always early."

In another second she would have called out "Dick, Dick!" and then her fate and that of all belonging to her would have been far different.

But, as her lips parted to utter her brother's name, a sudden sharp and well-remembered fear shot through her heart, and she stood still waiting for what might happen.

She had just distinguished another figure—that of a man—her father's surely—creeping towards the summer-house.

Two men, as there had been, not here, but miles away, on that often-recalled night when she and Neville had first met! Yes, there were two men, and one of them was wearing a wide-brimmed hat.

With fast-throbbing heart, she stood for some moments like a statue; then, whispering to herself—

"It is for Neville's sake," she moved forward and paused in the shadow of an overarching bough just outside the entrance to the arbor.

Once before, not so very far back, another arbor in her uncle's grounds had witnessed a turning-point in her life.

Was a like rustic shelter to play its part on this night in a sadder episode of her life's drama?

If these men near her spoke to each other—if they addressed each other by name—she would hear all, and discover perhaps, by means of a few unguarded sentences, what was the secret of which she suspected the existence, but of which she had never been able to obtain tangible proof.

The earnest words with which she had besought her father to clear up any mystery which there might be in their family history before she united herself to a man like Lord Wynmore came back to her recollection now with forcible distinctness.

And how had her father answered her? Full well she knew that no appeal to him would avail; if any secret shame connected with the Charlfords did actually exist, he would hide it from her for ever.

She must know whether in marrying Neville she was doing him an injustice! Oh, she must assure herself if it was in truth her father who was now here!

At that instant a voice came from the summer-house—

"So you were here first!"

The words meant nothing in themselves, but, oh, the terror with which they filled the girl!

For it was unmistakably her father who uttered them, distinctly but cautiously. A voice replied to him out of the gloom—

"First? I am always first."

Great Heaven—the second man's voice she also recognized! Had she not heard it on an occasion that she could never forget?

It was the very man who had met Caroline who spoke those last words—it was the same man who had also met her father by the pool.

In that bitter moment Mabel felt as if wounded to death; instinctively she divined that something was about to happen which must separate her from Neville.

CHAPTER XVII.

HER father's firm denial of ever having met any one in the boat-house at her uncle's or elsewhere by night or in secret rushed to Mabel's memory as she heard Mr. Charlford speaking again while she crouched in the shadow.

"Be as brief as you can, Lane," he said. "What is it you want of me?"

"I cannot be brief to-night," returned the man. "I must recapitulate a little. It is of no use to tell me to be brief to-night."

"Then for Heaven's sake do not speak here!" cried Mr. Charlford. "Would you imperil your own safety as well as mine? You declared in the strongest terms that you would never do anything which might put a stop to my—to Mabel's marriage!"

"Don't lose your head and your temper together, Filton," replied the other. "Speak I must—where is it to be?"

"To-morrow then, a couple of hours later than this, in my study," returned Mab's father hastily. "There will be less risk there than in our meeting at an inn, for of course I am known all over the country."

"You will let me in by the window? It will be late," said the man.

"You will come in by the side-door. Pay attention to what I am going to say to you," said Mr. Charlford.

"There is no need to tell me that," answered the other.

"Hush! I do not wish to repeat my words. My family will expect me to return from London by the midnight train to-morrow. It is not my custom to keep any one up to admit me—my own key does that. Refreshments are therefore placed ready, and every one retires. Come to supper if you will, and we will settle business definitively. Even you yourself must admit the danger of these meetings."

"Yes," laughed the other man; "but there is reason on my side. However, yours will be the fault if this next meeting be not the very last. Be prepared with that which will be necessary. You understand?"

"Perfectly. Have we not now had a dangerously lengthy conference?"

"Ah—you mean that you have had enough of my company? So be it! Good night, Filton—pleasant dreams! To-morrow, then, at one A. M."

"Be punctual," said Mab's father.

The other did not answer, but glided out of the arbor, and disappeared across the lawn.

Mab, standing as if petrified, afraid to move, seemed to herself to be passing again, near the arbor in her father's grounds, through the same scene which had been enacted—with a difference—by the boat-house on her uncle's estate.

She formed a desperate resolution on the spot, feeling that she must now indeed be parted for ever from Neville. Convinced that some dire disgrace was associated with her name, and that her father was at the mercy of this man, she resolved to discover what it was, then to reveal her knowledge to her father, to promise eternal silence, to beseech him to make what reparation was possible, to write a brief final farewell to Neville, and then to pass the rest of her sad existence doing what good she could, but hidden from the eyes of all those with whom she had been associated.

In one brief moment she had passed out of the sweetness of life into the horror of death.

In the stupor which fixed her to the spot she observed her father come to the entrance of the summer-house, and heard him call softly after the man who had just quitted him.

But the man did not hear the call, and her father did not repeat it.

"No matter," he muttered, "no matter," and then a sound of fearful laughter reached her ears. There was such menace distinguishable in the sound that Mabel shuddered.

"Let him come at one o'clock to-morrow; I shall be glad to see him!"

The words were muttered in the same tone as before, and then the speaker moved away and was lost amid the shadows of night.

But he did not go towards the house; he stole away in the direction of the long avenue which led towards the high-road.

With straining eyes Mabel gazed after the vanishing figure which had taken away all her young life's joy.

Mechanically she turned her steps towards the house, passed in at the half door and up to her room, hearing as she went the merry chatter of her younger sisters over their game—chatter which jarred upon her at that moment.

She rang the bell, and, when a maid appeared, she sent a message to her brother—her love, and would he speak to her directly he came in from the Rectory?

"Oh, if you please, miss, then you have not heard the news from Mr. Dick! The Rector's brother has had a paralytic stroke, and the tidings came by telegram just in the middle of the dinner-party. The poor Rector was so overcome that he was almost helpless, and Mr. Dick hadn't the heart to leave him, and offered to go up to town and see him safe. And he mayn't be back till to-morrow or the day after. He sent his love to you, miss, and is very sorry."

Dick gone—Dick! Then she must do what she had to do alone! And perhaps it was best so, after all.

Was it not more fitting that she, who had lost all that life had to offer, should be the one to make the discovery? Yes—yet—so let it be.

"If I can only live through to-morrow!" she moaned, as she sat crouched against the bed, without a thought however of seeking her usual rest.

An hour previously vistas of pleasure and of radiant happiness had opened in endless measure before her; now her horizon was bounded by the thought of living through the morrow.

Her task should be accomplished. Dick was absent; Neville was in town, conferring with his lawyers about settlements, repairing his town-house, already preparing for their wedding.

Neville! Her heart nearly broke with grief as she thought of what he would have to suffer when a few more hours had sped away.

"But with time he will acquiesce in my decision, and acknowledge that it was a right one. Years hence he will thank me from the bottom of his heart for refusing to let him ally his name with disgrace. And, if in ten years or more he marries his cousin Mary, it will be well. At least he will remember me as one who was not self-seeking—who cared more for him than for any one else in the world—who would not deceive him on any point."

"What—are you quite in the dark, Mab?" said Caroline, knocking and entering before she went to her own room. "Why did you not come in to bid us good night?"

"I have such a headache!" answered Mabel.

"Are you ill?" cried Caroline, startled by the tone of her voice.

"Ill? Oh, no, thank you! But, if my headache is not better, I shall stay quietly in bed to-morrow."

"Yes—do; but you seemed quite well at dinner. Has anything happened? Has there been a quarrel between you and Neville Wynmore?"

"A quarrel?" repeated Mabel. "Oh Caroline, I think we love each other too well to quarrel about trifles!"

"But one hears of lovers' quarrels, you know," said Caroline, in a tone of relief. "Can I tell Gibbons to bring you anything to relieve your headache? Try some sal-volatile."

"I think complete quiet is best, thank you, Carry. Good night."

"She will suffer too—they will all suffer," thought Mabel, as her sister closed the door. "And to think that this time last night we were all so happy! Poor Netta—poor Bella—dear, dear Dick—they were all so proud of me; and I had thought how happy I should be to have them all at the Manor! But all that is over—over for good!"

Presently she rose, secured her door lighted a taper, and unlocked her desk Lovingly she took out Neville's treasured letters and kissed them, and then went to a cabinet in which she kept the presents that her betrothed had made her.

They were costly and beautiful—several books handsomely bound; a diamond pendant which had belonged to his mother; a lovely suite of pearls—necklace, ear-drops, ring, and pendant; a sapphire brooch and bracelet; some glittering Indian ornaments, and other jewels.

Hastily she placed them together in a small travelling-bag, locked and addressed it to Lord Wynmore, and then hurried to her table and wrote, tears dropping meanwhile upon her betrothal ring—

"My own dear Neville,—Something very terrible has happened—something which makes me sure that my fear of bringing trouble upon you if I married you was not without foundation. I write while I yet have strength; to-morrow might be to late. You will understand that in writing this I feel that I renounce life. Oh, Neville, if there were no such thing as duty, I should marry you and hold my peace; but to deceive you would be torture even greater than bidding you farewell! Your mother's ring and all your dear gifts to me I will return—all except my betrothal-ring. There is no reason why I may not keep that. For I am yours in heart and soul, though we are parted. I shall not dare to wear it, Neville, but I will keep

it in fond remembrance of you, and you shall take it again when I die. And so Heaven bless and guard you, dearest Neville! Do not seek to see

"Your broken-hearted

"MABEL."

"His letters are mine too! No one else has any right to them," she said pathetically.

The clock over the stables struck three. Mabel fastened her letter, placed it in the traveling-bag, and then took off the evening-dress that she had been wearing.

"It is the last time that I shall put on such a dress—the last time that I shall wear an ornament," she thought, removing the jewels that she had worn all the evening.

Then she searched in her wardrobe for the plainest black dress she possessed. Henceforth her dress should accord with her altered life.

When she had done all this, she sat down, waiting for the day.

Four o'clock—five—six! And with the summer morning sounds of life and movement awoke in the household.

Mabel roused herself from her stupor of grief to meet the immediate requirements of the day.

A maid would soon present herself to bring hot water, to draw back the curtains, and to inform her young mistress that it was seven o'clock; and, as she intended to remain in bed in order to avoid comments on her altered appearance, she undressed hastily and buried her sad face in the pillow.

No matter how blithely the birds might carol to-day, no matter how sweetly the nightingales might trill out their song to-night, she would not go into the garden or the woods with Dick to listen—she had done with song and joy for evermore.

Neville would send her a loving letter as surely as the morning came; but no tender answer would she send back as heretofore.

Later in the day he would receive her last letter, the adieu which she had written over-night.

Presently she sank into a troubled sleep and dreamed that she saw her father with his countenance full of wrath, and Dick with his face full of despair, while he waved Neville away.

With a groan she awoke, and found the maid by her side.

"You were dreaming, miss. Perhaps you are not well this morning? Oh, indeed you look terribly ill!" said the girl.

"I will not get up. I will keep quiet to-day—I have a headache," returned Mabel faintly.

"May I bring you a cup of tea, miss; and shall I send for Doctor Edney?" asked the servant.

"No, thank you, Mary. Bring me a cup of tea when the letters are sent up—that is all."

And then again she fell into troubled dreams.

An hour or so later the maid re-entered, bringing her three letters—one from Neville, one from her father, and one from a cousin who was to have been one of her bridesmaids.

Hitherto she had been quick to open Neville's letters with joyful impatience; but now she turned aside, and let his letter lie untouched before her, while with shaking fingers she broke open her father's communication.

It was additional misery to her to read words which she knew well must have been weighed the day before in order to further his deceit.

"My dearest Mabel,—Will you tell the butler to leave some refreshment for me in my room as usual, as I do not wish to keep the servants up, and I cannot return till the last train? I shall walk from the station, and let myself in by the garden entrance. You will be glad to hear, my dear girl, that I saw Neville this morning; the dear fellow is in high spirits, and evidently thinks himself the most fortunate man in the world! Good-bye, my dear Mabel, until we meet.

"Your affectionate father,

"R. CHARLFORD."

"Good heavens! How could he write such words to me when he knew the deep deception underlying them? Oh, cruel father!" and a torrent of tears streamed from her eyes.

By-and-by her two youngest sisters knocked at the door.

"May we come in?" said Netta. "Dear Mab, you are ill; and we are so sorry! What can we do for you?"

Mabel kissed each of them in silence.

"What—haven't you opened Neville's letter?" cried Bella, taking up the still sealed envelope.

"Father says that he has seen Neville, and that he was in good spirits," answered Mab evasively. "My head pains me so that I must send you away. Give Caroline father's letter. He is coming home by the last train to-night."

Netta and Bella kissed her affectionately and went out of the room, and then Mabel was left alone with her torturing thoughts.

"One hour nearer!" she said aloud, as each hour struck by the clock gave notice that she was so much nearer to the dreadful knowledge which was to seal her fate.

The day wore away. Evening, with its balmy breath, stole over the landscape. Mabel had left her bed, and was now sitting by her window waiting for the dreadful night.

In the garden she perceived her two sisters and Miss Gray lingering.

It was the younger girls who were talking, and the governess; as for Caroline, she never spoke much now—she seemed to pass through life like an automaton.

By-and-by the stars came out, and the dew fell softly to refresh the earth; but no refreshing influence could reach Mabel's soul.

"It is the first time since our engagement that I have let a day go by without writing to him when he was away from me!" she thought, her heart full of Neville. "But how could I write to him with such an unspoken misery in my heart? He will know it all soon enough!"

The twilight deepened. Night came on. The group in the garden returned to the house.

Ten o'clock struck, booming out sonorously on the still air.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MIDNIGHT! Each of the twelve slow strokes seemed to steal away a portion of Mabel's young life. But the time for action had come.

An hour since she had listened to the closing of doors and windows which told her that the household had retired to rest.

At half-past twelve, robed in her black dress, she stole down to her father's study. In a few minutes more he himself would be there.

Cold refreshments, wine and fruit, had been placed on the table. Poor child—she little dreamed in what manner she was to remember this forever!

Casting a wild hurried glance round the apartment, she muttered—

"Oh, Neville, it is for your sake—for all our sakes—that I do this!" and then, crossing the room, she ensconced herself in a recess close to which stood a cabinet filled with choice Oriental china.

This recess, like the cabinet, was usually filled with art-objects, treasures too much prized by Mr. Charlford to be displayed on ordinary occasions.

It was concealed by an Oriental curtain, and was circular and fitted with narrow shelves, on which rested egg-shell china, Dresden shepherdesses, and agate cups.

Mabel knew where the key of this receptacle — or cupboard really — usually hung, and had secreted it during the evening.

She could stand inside, and, by leaving the door open half an inch and stooping forward a little, she could hear all that passed.

The curtain draped over the door would conceal the fact that it was not locked. Here, wrought up to a pitch of excitement bordering on frenzy, the girl took up her position, but she felt as if she were ensconcing herself in her own tomb.

Click! A door was swung back on its hinges, a footstep was audible; her father had returned. The hour she had waited for had arrived.

She heard him come in; through the narrow slit in the hanging drapery she saw him approach the table on which the supper was spread.

Then he laughed sardonically, and savage words broke from his lips—

"Now let him come! He has gone too far!"

Mabel, filled with a new and awful dread, watched and listened.

"Ha, ha!" continued her father, taking a small object from his pocket. "He will learn too late to beware of the anger of a patient man!"

Good Heaven, what did he mean? What was he about to do? The dreadful thought which flashed into Mabel's mind paralyzed her.

Her father held up to the light a tiny phial, poured a few drops of the liquid it contained into a glass, then swallowed some champagne, and dropped into a chair.

In an agony of despair Mabel clenched her hands, saying to herself, as she looked at her father—

"I will save him! I will save him yet!"

At that instant the quiet was broken by a cautious tapping without, and the clock struck one.

"There he is," said her father, muttering the words savagely; "but he can wait a moment."

Then he poured yet another drop of the liquid into the glass, set it in the place meant for his visitor, and made his way to the garden entrance.

Mabel glided swiftly from her hiding-place, seized another glass on the table, substituted it for the one into which her father had poured the liquid, which she drained into the shavings in the fireplace, and was back again in the recess whilst her father was still at the outer door.

She had done all in a restrained frenzy; and now she had passed into a new stage of emotion, she no longer felt that life was over for her.

Happiness was gone, but she must live to lead her father back to repentance. Thank Heaven Dick was not there! Even he should never know of the deed that had been meditated.

Oh, what was the awful secret thing which could prompt such a crime? It did not matter now however what it was, that had lost its importance for her; she did not stand there now to discover it, and thereby decide whether she dared link her fate with that of Neville Wynmore.

No! The daughter of a man who had aimed deliberately at another's life could never unite her fate with that of any honest man.

All that she waited for now was the wretched privilege of falling upon her knees beside her father after the man was gone, of falteringly imploring him to accept her help in an honorable way to circumvent their enemy.

Let the man have half their property if need be, what right had they to live among their neighbors as equals? Were they not, in fact, the children of a felon?

"Go in—you know your way," were the first words which struck her ear as the unwelcome visitor was ushered in.

"I am, as usual, the soul of punctuality," returned the other.

Both men spoke in a cautious undertone, even after the door was closed and they had seated themselves.

"Well, which is it to be, business first and pleasure afterwards, or vice versa? If you have walked far, you would like supper first."

"No, business first," replied the man insolently. "Now then, Filton, are you prepared to act on a proverb which in by-gone times you used to quote to me—'A word to the wise is enough'? If so, our interview will be as short a one as you could desire, and our farewell a final one. I want ten thousand pounds; and it is worth your while to give it to me!"

And with this demand he threw himself back in his chair, put his feet upon another—a chair covered with green velvet—and regarded his companion with determination.

Mr. Charlford appeared overwhelmed.

"Ten—thousand—pounds!" he repeated slowly, as if he could not believe his own ears.

"You are able to give it to me, Filton, as you know well enough. What, you have a fair daughter," he laid a strange emphasis upon the word "daughter," "about to wed a noble lord, and do you hesitate? Why, she will pay you five hundred a year if need be to keep all dark, if you go to her when she is 'my lady,' with a tale plausible enough! But that is your affair, the reimbursement! There must be many little ways of making up the sum, if it is actually true that you are short of ready cash. Let me suggest one which at once occurs to me. Your daughter's bridegroom-to-be has doubtless presented her with more than one costly gift. Appropriate them for your own use in this necessity—is it not for her happiness as well as your own safety that you take the baubles?—and then let it be supposed that there has been a jewel robbery on the premises. Come now, there is a brilliant idea given you without charge! Yet another way suggests itself. Borrow a sum on your effects. Why, the money I ask for is nothing to a man with your resources! What I ask for is too little, I must really make it fifteen thousand."

"You cannot mean it!" exclaimed Mr. Charlford, raising his head.

"I do mean it though; and I shall stick to it! What is the use of haggling over a paltry extra five thousand?"

"Fifteen-thousand-pounds!" fell from the lips of Mab's father.

"Fifteen, yes, that's the figure!" laughed the other man. "Well, how much of it am I to have to-night?

"The utmost I can do is five thousand down; and, to scrape that together, I have borrowed of John Charlford, and sold out some of my stock at great loss. You must see that I am doing all I can," said Mr. Charlford, as it in desperation.

"What you have to compass is, all that I want!" rejoined the other, with a disagreeable laugh, low and distinct, like his utterance.

"You were willing a little while ago to take ten thousand, and now you demand fifteen!" exclaimed Mab's father.

"Yes, now I demand fifteen! Moreover, I mean to pocket it! You've kept me waiting, you see, and, besides, you are about to be connected with a man who cannot count his gold. Of course I increased my price, as you would have done in my place."

Mr. Charlford passed his hand in a troubled manner over his brow, appearing immersed in thought. His companion interrupted him.

"You must make up your mind within five minutes, Filton; I cannot sit gaping at you all night. Now then," taking out a gold repeater—"I give you five minutes—which is five times too long."

Then the speaker closed his eyes, and waited for the answer. Slowly it came, as if spoken with infinite pain.

"All I can arrange is to give you five thousand to-night, and five thousand—borrowed money, mind—six weeks hence. The rest I will raise before Mabel's wedding-day. Will that satisfy you?"

"I will agree to those terms. It is a large sum, but," laughing gleefully, "I don't imagine you will feel much grief in reducing the portions due to your son and daughters. Ha, ha!"

"Stop that!" interposed Charlford. "Remember, if you make me desperate, if you drive me to a last stand, I shall do as Samson did, crush my enemies, even if I crush myself."

"Nonsense, you won't do that!" said the man, assuming a lighter tone. "And old friends should pull together. It is all agreed then? Hand over the rhino!"

"Sign this first, to show you have received it. You have made life pretty hard for me for a good many years to come," said Charlford.

"Absurd! Tell your friends that you have lost money through lending to a needy relative, and they will sympathize with you. What if you do have to put down your carriage and horses, or even to let this place? Isn't it better to do so for a few years than to spend the rest of your natural life at her Majesty's expense in prison? Of course it is! You will still have ample for all reasonable needs. If not, crib from the portions of the junior Charlfords."

"Their portions are tied up, as I have explained," observed Mr. Charlford.

"That is nothing to me!" laughed the man. "Fifteen thousand, why, it makes me feel young again. I say, don't you feel that Providence was hard on you in not finishing me off when you and I first did business together? It was a squeak for life, that!"

"Sign," said Mabel's father briefly.

"All right, here goes! Where shall I get my next instalment?"

"In London. I will let you know. I will meet you at the usual place in the City. Now shall we have some wine after all this wretched business?"

"'Tis anything but wretched to me, Filton," replied the other. "Wine? To be sure, and a bit of that pie too! I am as hungry as a hunter, for I have not dined yet."

"Eat then," said his unwilling host, carving the pie, and interrupting himself in order to pour some wine into the glass which Mabel had substituted for the one into which he had dropped the liquid.

The visitor emptied his glass, saying slowly—

"That puts new blood into one."

"Drink some more then," urged his companion, whose face had grown very pale and whose hands trembled.

"I'll eat now; keep me company," said the man.

"Oh, I dined in town, had a capital dinner too, so I'm not hungry! And, to tell the truth, business such as ours doesn't help the appetite."

"Not yours perhaps, but it helps mine. Fifteen thousand pounds! I shall marry again, Filton, and marry an heiress."

"By all means. I wish you luck," responded Charlford.

"You do, do you? Thanks; but it can't matter much to you now whether I live or die. Here's long life and health to you and to the future Lady Wynmore! I should like to make her acquaintance before I sail for the West. Bring her up to London with you."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

AT THE GRAVESIDE.—If a Turk dies, or looks as if he were dead, no physician, no inspector, comes to make sure that death has really taken place; but if it has not, the fact will soon be established, thanks to a procedure more efficient than all the gentle and refined means in vogue in the West to make sure that the deceased is not hoaxing his heirs.

Scarcely has the last breath been taken when the corpse is lifted up violently by vigorous arms, the clothing snatched off, laid on the flag-stones of the mortuary chamber or vestibule, and besprinkled with hot water, which is thrown upon it by the imam, provided with a large pail. The sprinkling is repeated two or three times, so that the family runs little danger of seeing the deceased resuscitated.

Thus scalded as a preliminary step, the body is washed and dried. Then it is bepowdered with camphor, and after being covered with a cloth embroidered with verses from the Koran, it is exposed for several hours in the court-yard. Afterwards the imam returns, and accompanies the corpse to its last resting-place.

The flat, covered bier is usually carried on the shoulders of friends of the deceased, or upon those of hired pall-bearers. Sometimes strangers assume this duty gratuitously, looking upon it as a pious and meritorious act.

The cortege is made up only of those that carry the coffin by turns, thus relieving one another without stopping. The coffin is made of cedar, and it is seldom varnished, but it is covered with a rug or a shawl, and there is placed at the head a turban or a fez if the deceased is a male.

The procession always moves hastily, not for the purpose of getting rid of the dismal burden, but to hasten the moment when the deceased shall enjoy eternal repose; for the Mussulman believes that the soul is restless and unhappy as long as the corpse is unburied. This is why three or four hours only elapse between death and burial.

On arriving at the cemetery, the imam so places the bier that the face of the deceased is turned towards Mecca; he then approaches the brink of the grave and utters a very long prayer, the conclusion of which is as follows: "Draw near, Mounkir and Nekir, angels of death and ministers of Allah. Great and blessed God, we humbly beseech thee to make the earth light for thy servant. May he find grace and mercy with thee. Amen."

A LADY being invited to visit the station of an electric light company, was told to leave her watch at home lest it should be magnetized by the strong electric current. She did so, but complained afterwards that her watch would not keep good time. She sent it to a jeweler, but he reported that it was not magnetized, and kept good time. Still, whenever she carried it, her time was too slow, although when she left it in her room it went correctly. A gentleman who knew of the circumstance suggested to the young lady that she wear another pair of corsets when next she carried the watch. She did so, and had no further trouble with the watch. The steel springs in her corset had been magnetised.

"Not long ago," says a St. Louis floor-walker, "a fine, stately lady came in and asked to be shown some 'dignifiers.' Wonderingly, I started up the centre aisle, with no idea of where I was showing the lady. At length I summoned courage enough to request the fair customer to be a little more explicit, as I was ignorant of what she meant by 'dignifiers.' With a look of scorn she replied, 'bustles, sir.'"

THE WALNUT TREE.

BY C. G. P.

Rustling leaves of a walnut tree,
Whose shade I sat in when I was young,
Have you never a message for me?
Has not your rustling a human tongue?
Many and many a time
Have I asked you this; but never a word,
In my hours of mirth, in my hours of pain,
From the roof of green have I ever heard,
Save a faint refrain
Of the silly old rhyme—
"A woman, a dog, and a walnut tree,
The more you beat them the better they be."

Yet the gardener felleth the fruitless tree.
The wayward hound must be taught to obey.
Is this the message you bring to me?—
"Thou must be chastened, even as they,
Since thou so fain wouldst climb
The upward path to divine content,
Its peace and patience at length attain,
Thou must go as sad souls before thee went.
There's a true refrain
In the silly old rhyme—
'A woman, a dog, and a walnut tree,
The more you beat them the better they be.'"

RANK AND RICHES.

BY WILKIE COLLINS.

CHAPTER I.

TWO REMONSTRANCES.

ONE afternoon old Miss Dulane entered her drawing-room; ready to receive visitors, dressed in splendor, and exhibiting every outward appearance of a defiant frame of mind.

Just as a saucy bronze nymph on the mantelpiece struck the quarter to three on an elegant clock under her arm, a visitor was announced—"Mrs. Newsham."

Miss Dulane wore her own undisguised gray hair, dressed in perfect harmony with her time of life.

Without an attempt at concealment, she submitted to be too short and too stout. Her appearance (if it had only been made to speak) would have said, in effect, "I am an old woman, and I scorn to disguise it."

Mrs. Newsham, tall and elegant, painted and dyed, acted on the opposite principle in dressing, which confessed nothing.

On exhibition before the world, this lady's disguise asserted that she had reached her thirtieth year on her last birthday.

Her husband was discreetly silent, and Father Time was discreetly silent; they both knew that her last birthday had happened thirty years since.

"Shall we talk of the weather and the news, my dear? Or shall we come to the object of your visit at once?"

So Miss Dulane opened the interview.

"Your tone and manner, my good friend, are no doubt provoked by the report in the newspaper of this morning. In justice to you, I refuse to believe the report."

So Mrs. Newsham adopted her friend's suggestion.

"Your kindness is thrown away, Elizabeth. The report is true."

"Matilda, you shock me!"

"Why?"

"At your age!"

"If he doesn't object to my age, what does it matter to you?"

"Don't speak of that man!"

"Why not?"

"He is young enough to be your son; and he is marrying you—impudently, undisguisedly marrying you—for your money!"

"And I am marrying him—impudently, undisguisedly marrying him — for his rank."

"You needn't remind me, Matilda, that you are the daughter of a tailor."

"In a week or two more, Elizabeth, I shall remind you that I am the wife of a nobleman's son."

"A younger son; don't you forget that."

"A younger son, as you say. He finds the social position, and I find the money—half a million at my own sole disposal. My future husband is a good fellow in his way, and his future wife is another good fellow in her way. To look at your grim face, one would suppose there were no such things in the world as marriages of convenience."

"Not at your time of life. I tell you plainly, your marriage will be a public scandal."

"That doesn't frighten us," Miss Dulane remarked. "We are resigned to every ill-natured thing that our friends can say of us. In course of time the next nine days' wonder will claim public attention, and we shall be forgotten. I shall be none the less on that account Lady Howel Beaucourt. And my husband will be happy in the enjoyment of every expensive taste which a poor man can gratify, for the first time in his life. Have you any more objections to make? Don't hesitate to speak out plainly."

"I have a question to ask, my dear."

"Charmed, I am sure, to answer it—if I can."

"Am I right in supposing that Lord Howel Beaucourt is about half your age?"

"Yes, my dear; my future husband is as nearly as possible half as old as I am."

Mrs. Newsham's uneasy virtue shuddered.

"What a profanation of marriage!" she exclaimed.

"Nothing of the sort," her friend pronounced positively. "Marriage, by the law of England (as my lawyer tells me), is nothing but a contract. Who ever heard of profaning a contract?"

"Call it what you please, Matilda. Do you expect to live a happy life, at your age, with a young man for your husband?"

"A happy life," Miss Dulane repeated, "because it will be a very innocent life."

She laid a certain emphasis on the last word but one.

Mrs. Newsham resented the emphasis, and rose to go. Her last words were the bitterest words that she had spoken yet.

"You have secured such a truly remarkable husband, my dear, that I am emboldened to ask a great favor. Will you give me his lordship's photograph?"

"No," said Miss Dulane, "I won't give you his lordship's photograph."

"What is your objection, Matilda?"

"A very serious objection, Elizabeth. You are not pure enough in mind to be worthy of my husband's photograph."

With that reply the first of the remonstrances assumed hostile proportions, and came to an untimely end.

* * * * *

The second remonstrance was reserved for a happier fate. It took its rise in a conversation between two men who were old and true friends. In other words, it led to no quarrelling.

The elder man was one of those admirable human beings who are cordial, gentle, and good-tempered, without any conscious exercise of their own virtues.

He was generally known in the world about him by a loud and familiar use of his Christian name. To call him "Sir Richard" in these pages (except in the character of one of his servants) would be simply ridiculous.

When he lent his money, his horses, his house, and (sometimes, after unlucky friends had dropped to the lowest social depths) even his clothes, this general benefactor was known, in the best society and the worst society alike, as "Dick."

He filled the hundred mouths of Rumor with his nickname, in the days when there was an opera in London, as the proprietor of the "Beauty-box."

The ladies who occupied the box were all invited under the same circumstances. They enjoyed operatic music; but their husbands and fathers were not rich enough to be able to gratify that expensive taste.

Dick's carriage called for them and took them home again; and the beauties all agreed (if he ever married) that Mrs. Dick would be the most enviable woman on the face of the civilized earth.

Even the false reports, which declared that he was privately married already, and on bad terms with his wife, slandered him cordially under the popular name.

And his intimate companions, when they alluded among each other to a romance in his life which would remain a hidden romance to the end of his days, forgot that the occasion justified a serious and severe use of his surname, and blamed him affectionately as "poor dear Dick."

The hour was midnight; and the friends, whom the most hospitable of men delighted to assemble round his dinner-table, had taken their leave, with the exception of one guest specially detained by the host, who led him back to the dining-room.

"You were angry with our friends," Dick began, "when they asked you about that report of your marriage. You won't be angry with me. Are you really going to be the old maid's husband?"

This plain question received a plain reply: "Yes, I am."

Dick took the young lord's hand. Simply and seriously he said, "Accept my congratulations."

Howel Beaucourt started as if he had received a blow instead of a compliment.

"There isn't another man or woman in the whole circle of my acquaintance," he declared, "who would have congratulated me on marrying Miss Dulane. I believe you would make allowances for me if I had committed murder."

"I hope I should," Dick answered gravely. "When a man is my friend, murder or marriage, I take it for granted that he has a reason for what he does. Wait a minute. You mustn't give me more credit than I deserve. I don't agree with you. If I were a marrying man myself, I shouldn't pick an old maid, I should prefer a young one. That's a matter of taste. You are not like me. You always have a definite object in view. I may not know what the object is. Never mind, I wish you joy all the same."

Beaucourt was not unworthy of the friendship that he had inspired.

"I should be ungrateful indeed," he said, "if I didn't tell you what my object is. You know that I am poor?"

"The only poor friend of mine," Dick remarked, "who has never borrowed money of me."

Beaucourt went on without noticing this.

"I have three expensive tastes," he said. "I want to get into Parliament; I want to have a yacht; I want to collect pictures. And, if you like, the selfish luxury of helping poverty and wretchedness, and hearing my conscience tell me what an excellent man I am. I can't do all this on five hundred a year, but I can do it on forty times five hundred a year. Moral: marry Miss Dulane."

Listening attentively until the other had done, Dick showed a sardonic side to his character never yet discovered in Beaucourt's experience of him.

"I suppose you have made the necessary arrangements," he said. "When the old lady releases you, she will leave consolation behind her in her will."

"That's the first ill-natured thing I ever heard you say, Dick. When the old lady dies, my sense of honor takes fright, and turns its back on her will. It's a condition, on my side, that every farthing of her money shall be left to her relations."

"Don't you call yourself one of them?"

"What a question! Am I her relation because the laws of society force a mock marriage on us? How can I make use of her money unless I am her husband? and how can she make use of my title unless she is my wife? As long as she lives I stand honestly by my side of the bargain. But when she dies the transaction is at an end, and the surviving partner returns to his five hundred a year."

Dick exhibited another surprising side to his character. The most compliant of men now became as obstinate as the proverbial mule.

"All very well," he said, "but it doesn't explain why, if you must sell yourself, you have sold yourself to an old lady. There are plenty of young ones and pretty ones with fortunes to tempt you. It seems odd that you haven't tried your luck with one of them."

"No, Dick. It would have been odd, and worse than odd, if I had tried my luck with a young woman."

"I don't see that."

"You shall see it directly. If I marry an old woman for her money, I have no occasion to be a hypocrite; we both know that our marriage is a mere matter of form. But if I make a young woman my wife because I want her money, and if that young woman happens to be worth a straw, I must deceive her and disgrace myself by shamming love. That, my boy, you may depend upon it, I will never do."

Dick's face suddenly brightened with a mingled expression of relief and triumph.

"Ha! my mercenary friend," he burst out, "there's something mixed up in this business which is worthier of you than anything I have heard yet. Stop! I'm going to be clever for the first time in my life. A man who talks of love as you do must have felt love himself. Where is the young one and the pretty one? And what has she done, poor dear, to be deserted for an old woman? Good God! how you look at me! I have hurt your feelings, I have been a greater fool than ever, I am more ashamed of myself than words can say!"

Beaucourt stopped him there, gently and firmly.

"You have made a very natural mistake," he said. "There was a young lady. She has refused me, resolutely refused me. There is no more love in my life. It's a dark life and an empty life for the rest of my days. I must see what money can do for me next. When I have thoroughly hardened my heart I may not feel my misfortune as I feel it now. Pity me or despise me. In either case let us say good night."

He went out into the hall and took his hat. Dick went out into the hall and took his hat.

"Have your own way," he answered. "I mean to have mine, I'll go home with you."

The man was simply irresistible. Beaucourt sat down resignedly on the nearest of the hall chairs. Dick asked him to return to the dining-room.

"No," he said; "it's not worth while. What I can tell you may be told in two minutes."

Dick submitted, and took the next of the hall chairs. In that inappropriate place the young lord's unpremeditated confession was forced from him, by no more formidable exercise of power than the kindness of his friend.

"When you hear where I met with her," he began, "you will most likely not want to hear any more. I saw her, for the first time, on the stage of a music-hall."

He looked at Dick. Perfectly quiet and perfectly impenetrable, Dick only said, "Go on." Beaucourt continued slowly in these words:

"She was singing Arne's delicious setting of Ariel's song in the "Tempest," with a taste and feeling completely thrown away on the greater part of the audience. That she was beautiful, in my eyes at least, I needn't say. That she had descended to a sphere unworthy of her and new to her, nobody could doubt. Her modest dress, her refinement of manner, seemed rather to puzzle than to please most of the people present; they applauded her, but not very warmly, when she retired. I obtained an introduction through her music-master, who happened to be acquainted professionally with some relatives of mine. He told me that she was a young widow; and he assured me that the calamity through which her family had lost their place in the world had brought no sort of disgrace on them. If I wanted to know more, he referred me to the lady herself. I found her very reserved. A long time passed before I could win her confidence, and a longer time still before I ventured to confess the feeling with which she had inspired me. You know the rest."

"You mean, of course, that you offered her marriage?"

"Certainly."

"And she refused you on account of your position in life?"

"No. I had foreseen that obstacle, and had followed the example of the adventurous nobleman in the old story. Like him, I assumed a name, and presented myself as belonging to her own respectable middle class of life. You are too old a friend to suspect me of vanity if I tell you that she had no objection to me, and no suspicion that I had approached her (personally speaking) under a disguise."

"What motive could she possibly have had for refusing you?" Dick asked.

"A motive associated with her dead husband," Beaucourt answered. "He had married her, mind, innocently married her, while his first wife was living. The woman was an inveterate drunkard; they had been separated for years. Her death had been publicly reported in the newspapers, among the persons killed in a railway accident abroad. When she claimed her unhappy husband he was in delicate health. The shock killed him. His widow, I can't, and won't, speak of her misfortune as if it was her fault, knew of no living friends who were in a position to help her. Not a great artist with a wonderful voice, she could still trust to her musical accomplishments to provide for the necessities of life. Plead as I might with her to forget the past I always got the same reply: 'If I was base enough to let myself be tempted by the happy future that you offer, I should deserve the unmerited disgrace which has fallen on me. Marry a woman whose reputation will bear inquiry, and forget me.' I was mad enough to press my suit once too often. When I visited her on the next day she was gone. Every effort to trace her has failed. Lost, my friend, irretrievably lost to me!"

He had offered his hand and said good night. Dick held him back on the door-step.

"Break off your mad engagement to Miss Dulane," he said. "Be a man, Howel; wait and hope! You are throwing away your life when happiness is within your reach if you will only be patient. That poor young creature is worthy of you. Lost? Nonsense! In this narrow little world, people are never hopelessly lost till they are dead and under-ground. Help me to recognize her by a description, and tell me her name. I'll find her; I'll persuade her to come back to you, and, mark my words, you will live to bless the day when you followed my advice."

This well-meant remonstrance was completely thrown away. Beaucourt's despair was deaf to every entreaty that Dick had addressed to him.

"Thank you with all my heart," he said. "You don't know her as I do. She is one of the very few women who mean no when they say no. Useless, Dick—useless!"

Those were the last words he said to his friend in the character of a single man.

CHAPTER II.

PLATONIC MARRIAGE.

SEVEN months have passed, my dear Dick, since my "inhuman obstinacy" (those were the words you used) made you one of the witnesses at my marriage to Miss Dulane, sorely against your will. Do you remember your parting prophecy, when you were out of the bride's hearing. "A miserable life is before that woman's husband—and, by Jupiter, he has deserved it!"

"Never, my dear boy, attempt to forecast the future again. Viewed as a prophet you are a complete failure. I have nothing to complain of in my married life.

"But you must not mistake me. I am far from saying that I am a happy man; I only declare myself to be a contented man. My old wife is a marvel of good temper and good sense. She trusts me implicitly, and I have given her no reason to regret it. We have our time for being together, and our time for keeping apart. Within our inevitable limits we understand each other and respect each other, and have a truer feeling of regard on both sides than many people far better matched than we are in point of age. But you shall judge for yourself. Come and dine with us when I return on Wednesday next from the trial trip of my new yacht. In the meantime I have a service to ask of you.

"My wife's niece has been her companion for years. She has left us to be married to an officer, who has taken her to India; and we are utterly at a loss how to fill her place. The good old lady doesn't want much. A nice-tempered refined girl, who can sing and play to her with some little taste and feeling, and read to her now and then when her eyes are weary, there is what we require; and these, it seems, is more than we can get, after advertising for a week past. Of all the companions who have presented themselves, not one has turned out to be the sort of person whom Lady Howel wants.

"Can you help us? In any case, my wife sends you her kind remembrances; and (true to the old times) I add my love."

On the day which followed the receipt of this letter, Dick paid a visit to Lady Howel Beaucourt.

"You seem to be excited," she said. "Has anything remarkable happened?"

"Pardon me if I ask a question first," Dick replied. "Do you object to a young widow?"

"That depends on the widow."

"Then I have found the very person you want. And, oddly enough, your husband has had something to do with it."

"Do you mean that my husband has recommended her?"

There was an undertone of jealousy in Lady Howel's voice, jealousy excited not altogether without a motive.

She had left it to Beaucourt's sense of honor to own the truth, if there had been any love-affair in his past life which ought to make him hesitate before he married. He had justified Miss Dulane's confidence in him, acknowledging an attachment to a young widow, and adding that she had positively refused him.

"We have not met since," he said, "and we shall never meet again."

Under those circumstances, Miss Dulane had considerately abstained from asking for any further details.

She had not thought of the young widow again until Dick's language had innocently inspired her first doubt. Fortunately for both of them, he was an outspoken man; and he reassured her unreservedly in these words: "Your husband knows nothing about it."

"Now," she said, "you may tell me how you came to hear of the lady."

"Through my uncle's library," Dick replied. "His will has left me his collection of books—in such a wretchedly neglected condition that I asked Beaucourt (not being a reading man myself) if he knew of any competent person who could advise me how to set things right. He introduced me to Farleigh and Halford, the well-known publishers. The second partner is a book-collector himself, as well as a bookseller. He kindly looks in now and then to see how his instructions for mending and binding are being carried out. When he called yesterday I thought of you, and I found he could help us to a young lady employed in his office at correcting proof-sheets."

"What is the lady's name?"

"Mrs. Evelin."

"Why does she want to leave her employment?"

"To save her eyes, poor soul. When the senior partner, Mr. Farleigh, met with her, she was reduced by family misfortunes to earn her own living. The publishers would have been only too glad to keep her in their office but for the oculist's report. He declared that she would run the risk of blindness, if she fatigued her weak eyes much longer. There is the only objection to this otherwise invaluable person—she will not be able to read to you."

"Can she sing and play?"

"Exquisitely. Mr. Farleigh answers for her music.

"And her character?"

"Mr. Halford answers for her character."

"And her manners?"

"A perfect lady. I have seen her and spoken to her; I answer for her manners, and I guarantee her personal appearance. Charming!"

For a moment Lady Howel hesitated. After a little reflection she decided that it was her duty to trust her excellent husband.

"I will receive the charming widow," she said, "to-morrow at twelve o'clock; and, if she produces the right impression, I promise to overlook the weakness of her eyes."

* * * * * *

Beaucourt had prolonged the period appointed for the trial trip of his yacht by a whole week.

His apology when he returned delighted the kind-hearted old lady who had made him a present of the vessel.

"There isn't such another yacht in the whole world," he declared. "I really had not the heart to leave that beautiful vessel after only three days' experience of her."

He burst out with a torrent of technical praises of the yacht, to which his wife listened as attentively as if she really understood what he was talking about. When his breath and his eloquence were exhausted alike, she said—

"Now, my dear, it's my turn. I can match your perfect vessel my perfect lady."

"What! you have found a companion at last?"

"Yes."

"Did Dick find her for you?"

"He did indeed. You shall see for yourself how grateful I ought to be to your friend."

She opened a door which led into the next room.

"Mary, my dear, come and be introduced to my husband."

Beaucourt started when he heard the name, and instantly recovered himself. He had forgotten how many Maries there are in the world.

Lady Howel returned, leading her favorite by the hand, and gaily introducing her the moment they entered the room.

"Mrs. Evelin; Lord——"

She looked at her husband. The utterance of his name was instantly suspended on her lips. Mrs. Evelin's hand, turning cold at the same moment in her hand, warned her to look round.

The face of the woman more than reflected the inconcealable agitation in the face of the man.

The wife's first words, when she recovered herself, were addressed to them both.

"Which of you can I trust," she said, "to tell me the truth?"

"You can trust both of us," her husband answered.

The firmness of his tone irritated her.

"I will judge of that for myself," she said. "Go back to the next room," she added, turning to Mrs. Evelin; "I will hear you separately."

The companion, whose duty it was to obey—whose modesty and gentleness had won her mistress's heart—refused to retire.

"No," she said; "I have been deceived too. I have my right to hear what Lord Howel has to say for himself."

Beaucourt attempted to support the claim that she had advanced. His wife sternly signed to him to be silent.

"What do you mean?" she said, addressing the question to Mrs. Evelin.

"I mean this. The person whom you speak of as a nobleman was presented to me as 'Mr. Vincent, an artist.' But for that deception I should never have set foot in your ladyship's house."

"Is this true, my lord?" Lady Howel asked, with a contemptuous emphasis on the title of nobility.

"Quite true," her husband answered. "I thought it possible that my rank might prove an obstacle in the way of my hopes. The blame rests on me, and on me alone. I ask Mrs. Evelin to pardon me for an act of deception which I deeply regret."

Lady Howel was a just woman. Under other circumstances she might have shown herself to be a generous woman.

That brighter side of her character was incapable of revealing itself in the presence of Mrs. Evelin, young and beautiful, and in possession of her husband's heart. She could say, "I beg your pardon, madam; I have not treated you justly."

But no self-control was strong enough to restrain the next bitter words from passing her lips.

"At my age," she said, "Lord Howel will soon be free; you will not have long to wait for him."

The young widow looked at her sadly—answered her sadly.

"Oh, my lady, your better nature will surely regret having said that!"

For a moment her eyes rested on Beaucourt, with rising tears. She left the room—and left the house.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

Her First Engagement.

BY H. B. D.

AND where is Guy?" said Miss Montyou. "Dear little Guy! I haven't seen him for six long years now. My little husband, as I used to call him. Why don't they bring Guy to see me?"

Marian Montyou was a peerless beauty. All her life long her mirror and her friends had told her the same story.

She had walked on velvet, and breathed in the atmosphere of roses.

And at eighteen she was becoming wearied of all this sycophancy and adulation, or she might have been if a new interest had not risen up in her heart—her engagement to Colonel Brandette.

"Oh!" answered Mrs. Charteris, her friend, who was pouring the fragrant "afternoon tea" into egg-shell cups, hand-painted and rich with barbaric decorations of violet and gold; "you wouldn't know Guy now. He is twelve years old, and as handsome as the old pictures of Lord Byron's "Manfred" must have been at that age. You must not call him little Guy any more. He is nearly as tall as you are."

And the beautiful boy who came in at that moment fully justified all the mother's words of praise.

Miss Montyou held out her small, snowy hand, all sparkling with gems and precious stones.

"Sweetheart, come here and kiss me," said she. "You are as handsome as ever, I see."

Guy Charteris threw his arms fondly about Miss Montyou's lovely neck. Ever since he could remember he had loved this beautiful girl with all a child's devotion.

At six years old he had solemnly asked if the angels were any fairer than Miss Montyou.

At ten he had tried to string together a lot of rhymes to express his devotion to her. Miss Montyou only laughed. She was used to this sort of thing. But to Guy Charteris it was something deep and real, never to be forgotten.

"What's that new ring on your finger, Marian?" he asked, suddenly, as Miss Montyou beckoned him to a seat beside her.

Her exquisite cheek crimsoned like the heart of a sea-shell as the abrupt question was spoken.

"Are you my father confessor, Guy?" she asked, smiling. "But I don't mind telling you, my friend. It's my engagement-ring."

The boy's swarthy, handsome face altered. He flung the snow-flake of a hand from him.

"Your engagement-ring!" he repeated, in a husky voice. "But you forget, Marian—you are engaged to me."

"Just hear the boy!" cried Miss Montyou.

"You have always called me your husband," he cried out, in accents of angry protestation.

"Oh, but—but, Guy, that was only in play."

"In play!" he echoed. "But I meant it in sober earnest. Marian, you are to be my wife. You always said you would."

"Sweetheart, don't talk nonsense," coaxed the beauty, with an air of bewitching authority. "I am engaged to Colonel Brandette. We are to be married at Christmas. I am to live in London; and I hope dear Guy, you will often come to see us," she added, as she turned to Mrs. Charteris.

But Guy's face had turned pale with passion.

"Marian!" he cried, "you have deceived me, and I will never speak to you again! No—never!"

"Dearest Guy——" remonstrated Marian.

But almost before the words had passed her lips he had rushed from the room like a whirlwind.

Miss Montyou only remained at Bournemouth a week; but during the whole of that time she never saw Guy Charteris again.

And she went away with a little sore spot in her heart.

For peerless beauty, queen of all hearts though she was, she could not bear to lose the allegiance even of a boy.

"Kiss him good-bye for me," she said, as she went away.

"I don't think he would allow anyone to do that," said Mrs. Charteris, smiling.

Alas! that life cannot be always May; for, as the years rolled by, they dealt no added happiness to Marian Montyou.

She did not marry Colonel Brandette, after all. The Colonel took exception to a fancy she had for performing in private theatricals.

"I cannot have my wife an actress," he had said, with, perhaps, more brusqueness than he intended.

"Then you cannot have me for a wife," Miss Montyou had retorted, with a mocking curtsey; and so the engagement was broken.

And at last Marian went on the stage in sober earnest. Not for a freak or a whim, but to earn her bread.

Her guardian, a well-meaning, weak-headed man, had invested her property unfortunately, and she found herself penniless one cruel day.

But she was a brilliant actress, and bated no whit of her queenly dignity on the stage until one day a new beauty—fresher, perhaps—dawned on the scene, and Marian found herself supplanted.

"It is, perhaps, just as well," said Mrs. Mudge, her faithful companion. "You know, my dear, that your lungs are not strong this winter, and those long parts tried them dreadfully. Perhaps you will be all the better for the rest."

Marian turned a ghastly face towards good Mrs. Mudge.

"But how are we to live?" said she.

"You don't mean to say that you have not got any means to fall back upon?" said Mrs. Mudge.

"We have been living beyond our income for the last year," said Miss Montyou. "Where should I get means?"

"But surely you have hosts of good friends?"

"None that I choose to call upon," said Marian, proudly.

Mrs. Mudge groaned deeply.

"Then," said she, "what—what are we to do?"

"That's just what I should like someone to tell me!" cried Marian, with a laugh which was anything but mirthful.

That night she was smitten down with brain fever.

All those dreary days and weeks time left no record on the tablets of her consciousness.

One breezy, violet-scented April morning, however, she came back, as from a long journey, and found herself supported on pillows, weaker than any baby, all her early golden tresses shorn ruthlessly away.

"I have been very sick," she said. "I have been very near to the gates of the grave."

By degrees Mrs. Mudge told her all—how she owed her life to the constant attention and marvellous skill of the physician who had attended her through her illness.

"Who sent for him?" said Marian.

"The landlady of the hotel," explained Mrs. Mudge. "She said he was very skilful and successful. And he has been more than kind. He has spoken to the people here not to press for the bill. He has supplied fruit, wine, medicine, as if he were your brother. But you are looking tired, my dear. I must not talk any more to you just now."

And no further entreaties could tempt Mrs. Mudge to any more disclosures.

"I should like to thank this unknown benefactor," said Marian to herself, as she lay thinking. "Though I do not know why anybody should trouble themselves to help me now."

Marian looked at him with a bewildered face. Where had she seen him before? Where had she dreamed of him?

"Well?" he said, with a smile.

Then it all came back to her. She looked pleadingly up into his face.

"It is Guy Charteris!" she said. "It is my little lover!"

They were married as soon as she had regained her old bloom and strength, and was able to travel.

She was six years older than he, but between twenty-four and thirty the gulf is easily bridged over. And Doctor Charteris had never loved any woman but her, and as he declared fervently, never should.

"I vowed a vow once that you should be my wife, Marian," he said; "but I did not dream that it was so soon to be fulfilled."

And so, as the child-lore says, "They lived happy ever after."

WITCHES' LADDERS. — Although the Christian era has advanced some 1887 years, superstition, despite the School Board, still flourishes in the country places of England. In Somersetshire, witches' ladders, made of wheat straw, are largely popular. Those who make a witch's ladder take four straws, tying two together top and bottom, for each side of the ladder. The short straws are then inserted between these stops, and small feathers inserted near them. The witch's ladder is used for the confusion of evil spirits, and also for the attainment of a desire. If anything goes cross-grained—for instance, if the fire will not burn, or the irons will not heat, or the lover refuses to come, or the husband stops out too late—the ladder is swung to and fro. The formula is "Burn fire," or "Irons heat," "Lover come," or "Husband home," and the superstitious aver that the adjuration has never been known to fail.

Scientific and Useful.

PAINT REMOVAL.—For removing paint from iron a mixture of one pound of lime to four pounds of potash and six quarts of water has been recommended as most efficient; other proportions of the same materials do not do so well.

RAILWAY SEAT.—A new form of railway seat spring has been devised in England and is highly spoken of. The entire seat is carried on a coiled spring of peculiar form, and is free to move in all directions, so that every jerk and oscillation which the car can receive is perfectly taken up.

DELICATE CEMENT.—For delicate work, such as cementing silks for fans, &c., the following cement is much used by the Japanese. Take best finely-ground rice-flour, mix with a little cold water, and then pour on boiling water till of proper consistence. Then transfer to a clean enamelled saucepan, and boil two minutes, stirring vigorously. This is far superior to the cements generally used, and when well made is almost transparent.

OLD TOMATO CANS.—A prominent junk dealer recently received an order for 10,000 old tomato cans. The dealer explained that much of this kind of tin is used for corners and edge pieces on a low grade of trunks, while many people used it for flashings on roofs. The dealer is obliged to melt the solder off, straighten the cans out into flat sheets, pack the pieces in flat bundles for shipment, and only gets about $10 per ton for his trouble.

SAWDUST.—It is at times difficult to find any use for sawdust, but the following is a way of deriving advantage from it: Water is added, up to a degree of plasticity; the mixture of one to three parts of resinous sawdust, and one part of washed kaolin is ground and pressed by means of a press. The lumps thus obtained are dried in the air, then placed in a stove, and, lastly, vitrified in the ovens under a white-red temperature. These blocks can be sawn, planed and polished in the shape of incombustible bricks, which are used for building houses.

HINTS.—To clean black cashmere, soak the cloth in a solution of supercarbonate of soda and water for twenty-four hours. Hang up to dry and iron while damp. Spirits of ammonia, diluted with water, if applied with a sponge or flannel to discolored spots on carpets or garments will often restore the color. To remove varnish without injuring paint, brush on spirit of ammonia or hartshorn, which softens the oil, allowing of its being rubbed off easily. Put gum camphor with your new silver, and it will never tarnish as long as the gum is there. Never wash silver in soapsuds, as that gives it a white appearance.

Farm and Garden.

SOAPSUDS.—Save the soapsuds. Pour them over the manure heap. They will not only add to the value of the manure but assist in preventing the escape of ammonia.

BRUSH AND CURRY-COMB.—If the brush and curry-comb were used on cows, as is done on horses, the quality of the milk and butter would be improved, as the animals would be cleaner and in better condition at all times.

IN THE STALL.—Never confine an animal in its stall by fastening a rope around its neck. Always use halters, both for horses and cattle, as a slight mistake in adjusting a rope, or in making the knot, may cause injury or loss.

GRAFTING-WAX.—A good grafting-wax is four pounds of resin, one pound of tallow and four pound of beeswax. Melt all together over a slow fire and when it is melted turn out into a tub of cold water and pull as shoemakers' wax is made. Soften with hot water.

OLIVE OIL.—The best and simplest means of removing any unpleasant smell from olive-oil consists in warming it over a moderate fire, when it should be kept for some time without allowing it to boil. The oil should be constantly stirred; it then becomes quite pure and inodorous.

GOOD TOOLS.—Good implements save labor. The use of an inferior plow during the busy season not only delays operations to a certain extent, but the effects of the poor work done extends to the time when the crop is harvested.

SHEEP.—Whenever sheep are afflicted with tick, or other animals with vermin, it indicates a low condition of the system, caused either by the vermin in the first place, or by improper feeding. The better the condition of the animals the less liability to attack. They will not improve until relieved, and the longer this be delayed the more difficult it will become.

STOPPING RUNAWAY HORSES.—The following method of stopping runaway horses would seem to be good, but few horse-owners would care to advertise the vicious character of their animals by such a conspicuous device; neither would the owner of a horse ordinarily safe wish to adopt such a cumbersome contrivance as a regular part of his harness: "Place a cord with a running knot around the horse's neck near the neck strap. To this slip-noose attach a pair of reins which may be thrown over the dash-board ready to be seized at once. When the horse starts, take up this cord and tighten the horse's throat. The most furious horse thus checked stops instantly and will not fall or kick. This is a Russian discovery."

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Assurance and Confidence.

Too little attention is given in conversation and in letter-writing to the distinctions in meanings between words that are said to be synonyms. We propose in the present paper to take two words only, assurance and confidence, to illustrate our meaning.

Assurance implies either the act of making another sure, or of being sure one's self; confidence implies simply the act of the man in confiding, which is equivalent to a feeling.

Assurance, as an action, is to confidence as the means to the end. We give a person an assurance in order to inspire him with confidence.

Assurance and confidence, as a sentiment in ourselves, may respect either that which is external of us, or that which belongs to ourselves. In the first case, they are both taken in an indifferent sense; but the feeling of assurance is much stronger than that of confidence, and applies to objects that interest the feelings. "I appeal to posterity," says Æschylus; "to posterity I consecrated my works, in the assurance that they will meet that reward from time which the partiality of my contemporaries refuses to bestow."

Confidence, on the other hand, applies only to such objects as exercise the understanding. "All the arguments," says Johnson, "upon which a man who is telling the private affairs of another may ground his confidence of security, he must, upon reflection, know to be uncertain, because he finds them without effect upon himself." Thus we have an assurance of a life to come—an assurance of a blessed immortality; we have a confidence in a person's integrity.

As respects ourselves exclusively, assurance is employed to designate either an occasional feeling or a habit of the mind; confidence is, for the most part, an occasional feeling. Assurance, therefore, in this sense, may be used indifferently, but in general it has a bad acceptation; but confidence has an indifferent or a good sense.

Assurance is a self-possession of the mind, arising from the conviction that all in ourselves is right. "I never sit silent," says Johnson, "in company when secret history is talking, but I am reproached for want of assurance." Confidence is self-possession only in particular cases, grounded on the reliance we have in our abilities or our character. Johnson, too, says, "The hope of fame is necessarily connected with such considerations as must abate the ardor of confidence and repress the vigor of pursuit."

The man of assurance never loses himself under any circumstances, however trying; he is calm and easy when another is abashed and confounded. The man who has confidence will generally have it in cases that warrant him to trust to himself.

A liar utters his falsehoods with an air of assurance, in order the more effectually to gain belief; conscious innocence enables a person to speak with confidence when interrogated.

Assurance shows itself in the behavior, confidence in the conduct. Young people are apt to assert everything with a tone of assurance.

"Modesty," says Moore, "the daughter of Knowledge, and Assurance, the offspring of Ignorance, met accidentally upon the road; and as both had a long way to go, and had experienced from former hardships that they were alike unqualified to pursue their journey alone, they agreed for their mutual advantage, to travel together." No man should undertake anything without a certain degree of confidence in himself.

"I must observe," says Addison, "that there is a vicious modesty which justly deserves to be ridiculed, and which those very persons often discover who value themselves most upon a well-bred confidence. This happens when a man is ashamed to act up to his reason, and would not, upon any consideration, be surprised in the practice of those duties for the performance of which he was sent into the world."

PUBLIC sentiment despises the desire for notoriety, and holds the man who is possessed by it to be not only a weak man, but, in a sense, a bad one. The popular explanation of the difference between the pursuit of fame and that of notoriety is that the man who loves fame seeks it through lofty means, and the man who desires notoriety is regardless of means. People believe that the man is either false or willing to be false; that he will simulate or dissimulate qualities rather than give up his object, and does not seek it so much as he is possessed by it, till the sense of right and wrong, the becoming and the unbecoming, disappears from his mind. Right and wrong have become alike to him an overmastering desire for personal display which is not vanity, but a separate and lower passion. He craves to be noticed, instead of craving to be noticed with reverence or regard, and will knowingly lower himself rather than remain invisible in the crowd.

THERE is no condition in life so fixed and permanent as to be out of danger or the reach of change; and we all may depend upon it that we shall take our turns of wanting and desiring. By how many unforeseen causes may riches take wing! The crowns of princes may be shaken, and the greatest that ever awed the world have experienced what the turn of the wheel can do. That which hath happened to one man may befall another, and therefore that excellent rule of our Saviour's ought to govern us in all our actions—"Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do you also to them likewise." Time and chance happens to all, and the most affluent may be stript of all and find his worldly comforts like so many withered leaves dropping from him.

INCONSISTENT soul that man is!—languishing under wounds which he has the power to heal! his whole life a contradiction to his knowledge! his reason, that precious gift of God to him—instead of pouring in oil, serving but to sharpen his insensibilities, to multiply his pains, and render him more melancholy and uneasy under them! Poor, unhappy creature, that he should do so! Are not the necessary causes of misery in this life enough without adding voluntary ones to his stock of sorrow? Struggle against evils which cannot be avoided and submit to others, which a tenth part of the trouble they create him would remove from his heart forever.

ALL ills spring from some vice, either in ourselves or others; and even many of our diseases proceed from the same origin. Remove the vices, and the ills follow. You must only take care to remove all the vices, if you remove part, you may render the matter worse. By banishing vicious luxury, without curing sloth and indifference to others, you only diminish industry and add nothing to men's charity or their generosity.

LIKE flakes of snow that fall unperceived upon the earth, the seemingly unimportant events of life succeed one another. As the snow gathers together, so are our habits formed. No single flake that is added to the pile produces a sensible change; no single action creates, however it may exhibit, a man's character; but as the tempest hurls the avalanche down the mountains, and overwhelms the inhabitant and his habitation, so passion, acting upon the elements of mischief which pernicious habits have brought together by imperceptible accumulation, may overthrow the edifice of truth and virtue.

AT the best, no one can know much. Compared with the infinite realms above and beyond us, to be yet discovered, the knowledge of the most learned man covers but a tiny spot; and what fraction of such a spot ours may cover is but a small matter. But it does matter to ourselves, and to all around us, the use we shall make of what we possess—whether we shall carry it around for exhibition, or whether we shall convert it into a living force to elevate our own natures and to bless and help mankind.

DAY after day our span is shortened and our powers are lessened; but those who desire to do good have always time wherein to effect it, and love and virtue do not perish. Example and the good we do in life are our truest immortality. For one life that we have redeemed by our own, one impetus that we have given to the ball of progress, we may well give years of personal sorrow; and no time is lost that shows a brave front to pain, that bears disappointment with equanimity, or that does one hair's-breadth of actual good.

WE cannot afford to waste, or ignore, or despise anything; for, however useless it may appear to our short-sighted vision, we know not what treasures of future growth and advancement may be enfolded within it, or how readily it may respond to wise culture, like the tiny germ that is nourished in the warm soil and strengthened by the refreshing rain.

EVERY age and every nation has certain characteristic vices, which prevail almost universally, which scarcely any person scruples to avow, and which even rigid moralists but faintly censure. Succeeding generations change the fashion of their morals with the fashion of their hats and their coaches, take some other kind of wickedness under their patronage, and wonder at the depravity of their ancestors.

EVERY one must see daily instances of people who complain from a mere habit of complaining, and make their friends uneasy, and strangers merry, by murmuring at evils that do not exist and repining at grievances which they do not really feel.

YOU cannot put yourself alongside a wrong system without endorsing wrong deeds, any more than you can write your name on the back of a note without making yourself responsible for the sum named on the other side.

AS flowers never put on their best clothes for Sunday, but wear their spotless raiment and exhale their odor every day, so let your Christian life, free from stain, ever give forth the fragrance of the love of God.

WE never know the true value of friends. While they live we are too sensitive to their faults; when we have lost them we only see their virtues.

IT is one of the worst effects of prosperity to make a man a vortex instead of a fountain, so that, instead of throwing out, he learns only to draw in.

WHAT a man knows should find its expression in what he does. The value of superior knowledge is chiefly in that it leads to a performing manhood.

INFIDELITY gains the victory when it wrestles with hypocrisy or with superstition, but never when its antagonist is reason.

PATIENCE is the best remedy against calumnies. Time, sooner or later, discovers the truth.

The World's Happenings.

Olivet, D. T., has a woman barber.

There are 30,000,000 hens in this country.

Last year 1,700 clergymen went to one New York theatre.

There are 10,000 women in Cincinnati who earn their own living.

The Michigan Legislature has put a price on the heads of English sparrows.

There are 490,000 unmarried men in Paris against 280,000 married men.

Emperor William nods half his time now. His hardest work is to keep awake.

English scientists are wrangling over the question as to whether the sun is or is not blue.

The best modern siege guns cost $97,000, and it costs $900 to shoot one of them only once.

The average age of those who enter college in this country is 17. A century ago it was 14.

A Florida mother has two children, one named Jefferson Davis and the other Abraham Lincoln.

A farmer in Delaware county, N. Y., has a pork barrel that has been in constant use for 100 years.

Two employes appointed in 1831 by Andrew Jackson are still in the Postal Department at Washington.

The Mayor of Brooklyn suffers from insomnia to such a degree that he sometimes sleeps only 1 hour in 24.

Benjamin Shurtleef, of Chicago, recently sold a piece of land in that city for $135,000, which he bought in 1850 for $800.

A Mexican has been selling to the unwary at San Jose, Cal., nuggets of tinfoil, representing them to be of silver.

In Colorado, as the story goes, a flock of snowed-under sheep lived two weeks and grew fat feeding on each other's fleece.

A Florida paper states that a child recently born in that State has six grandmothers and seven uncles named William.

A fund is being gotten up for the purpose of reviving the old system of apprenticing in London, which has nearly died out.

A resident of Eatonton, Ga., has prepared and furnished a large and costly cyclone pit near the back door of his residence.

An Italian is said to have invented a luminous printing ink that renders it possible for newspapers to be read in the dark.

Manhattan Island, on which New York is built, is said to be gradually sinking, and the sea will yet cover the present site of the city.

A case was tried last week in Fayette county, Ohio, in which the plaintiff and defendant and fifteen witnesses were all deaf mutes.

Bulls for fighting purposes are worth from $200 to $300 in Mexico, an increase of nearly double, on account of the rage for bull fighting.

The rays of the sun shining directly upon the faces of sleeping children is very injurious to the eyes, especially if they are inclined to weakness.

Kwoh Hao, the young Emperor of China, who has been declared "of age" at 16, has assumed the full reins of government. His name signifies "Continuation of Glory."

One day recently a newspaper published at Constantinople had the following jot: "His Majesty (the Sultan) is slightly indisposed, having been bitten by a mosquito last night."

In Boston, it is stated, the arrests made for serious offenses committed on the highway has shown a very marked falling off in number since the electric light for street purposes was introduced.

The annual expenditures in the United States for several leading articles of consumption are as follows: Liquor, $700,000,000; tobacco, $350,000,000; sugar, $187,000,000; coffee, tea and cocoa, $130,000,000.

Suit has been brought by one of the audience of a burlesque entertainment against one of the performers, because while singing in a topical song she pointed to him and otherwise rendered him ridiculous.

A little boy in Newark, N. J., was playing with a "squawker," a small rubber balloon with a wooden tube in it, a few days ago, when the toy wasin some way drawn into his throat, choking him to death in a few minutes.

An organ grinder living near Hoboken, N. J., took his savings, amounting to $106, out of his strong box one day recently and gave them to his son to deposit in a savings bank. The son has not been heard from since.

The Birmingham, Conn., Electric Light Works were overrun with rats until the superintendent had a happy thought. To wires attached to dynamos he fastened bits of meat and scattered them about. The rats nibbled and were lost.

'Squire Mayes, who died lately at West Alexander, Washington county, Pa., is said to have succeeded his father and grandfather as a local justice of that place (which, being near the line separating the State from West Virginia, was a sort of Gretna Green for runaway lovers), where they together married nearly 5,000 couples.

A natural curiosity has been discovered at Solothurn, Switzerland, the centre of a large watch manufacturing district. It is the nest of a wagtail, built wholly of long spiral steel shavings, without the least part of vegetable or animal fibre used in its construction. The nest has been preserved in the Museum of Natural History.

The prints of peculiarly arranged teeth were found in some cheese that was left in a house in Jersey City after burglars visited it last week. Partly on suspicion a colored man was afterward arrested and ordered to bite a piece of cheese. The marks left by his teeth on the cheese were the same as those on the remnant found in the house after the burglary, and he was committed for trial.

AND SO FORGET.

BY QUEEN ELIZABETH.

I grieve, yet dare not show my discontent;
I love, and yet am forced to seem to hate;
I dote, but dare not what I ever meant;
I seem stark mute, yet inwardly do prate;
I am, and am not—freeze, and yet I burn;
Since from myself my other self I turn.

My care is like my shadow in the sun—
Follows me flying—flies when I pursue it;
Stands and lives by me—does what I have done.
This too familiar care doth make me rue it,
No means I find to rid him from my breast,
Till by the end of things it be suppressed.

Some gentler passion steal into my mind,
(For I am soft and made of melting snow;)
Or be more cruel, love, or be more kind;
Or let me float or sink, be high or low;
Or let me live with some more sweet content;
Or die, and so forget what love e'er meant.

Their Last Chance.

BY PHYLLIS.

OH! It is more than unfortunate. I don't believe I ever was so disappointed in my life. If it had happened any other evening but this—and at the last moment, too! It is really too bad." Tears of mortification stood in her eyes.

"Only what one should expect from a servant," said her sister, the Hon. Mrs. Trevenning, smoothing down a fold of her exquisite ball-gown and frowning slightly. "They are ever and always the most troublesome set on earth. It often occurs to me that they do things on purpose! Would any one, I ask you, except one's coachman, elect to break his collar-bone at ten o'clock on the night of the best ball of the season? I should think not, indeed. It is just the little bit too much."

"If you had only refused leave to Thomas this morning!"

"What could I do, my good child? He said his mother was dying, and I suppose even a footman has his feelings. One daren't be brutal nowadays."

"It looks like an artfully planned design," said Miss Dare indignantly. She stood before a mirror that reached from floor to ceiling in her sister's boudoir, and surveyed her slender figure, clad in its perfect gown, with a glance of the deepest melancholy.

"To think of the hours I have spent over this dress," she said. "I believe I wore Vrlere nearly to death's door; and all for nothing. No one will see it to-night."

"Well, there is nothing to be gained by crying over it," declared Mrs. Trevenning, with a touch of impatience. "My gown is as good as yours any day, and is just as likely to blush unseen so far as to-night is concerned. I only wish I knew how I was to pay for it. Make up your mind to the inevitable, Connie, which means staying at home for this evening, at least."

"I can't" declared Connie desperately "I have dwelt too long upon this one ball to feel resigned to its loss all in a second. Oh, if anything could be done——"

Here the door was flung wide, and a tall young man in a morning suit of grey tweed came into the room. He was rather dark, and very like Mrs. Trevenning.

"What! You, Dudley?" cried she. "And at this hour? Why, where have you come from?"

"The Manor, straight. The old boy is better, so I left him nursing the leg, and ran up to town to have a little fling before the season says good-bye. How specially festive you two look! Going anywhere?"

Mrs. Trevenning resented herself with a little groan, and Constance made a gesture of despair.

"By Jove! Who's dead? What's wrong?" asked their brother, very properly impressed by this display of feeling.

"Everything. Everything!" cried Constance. "This very instant we have had word sent us that Martin the coachman fell in the stable half an hour ago and broke his collar-bone; Thomas, Vivienne's new footman, started early this morning to attend his mother's sick bed; and here are we, dressed to go out, and not a soul to drive us. It is the Duchess of Dartrie's ball, and the Princess is to be there, and Viv and I got new gowns for it, and—altogether—it is a shame, isn't it?"

"The deuce of a sell," said Sir Dudley, with honest sympathy. "But why not try a cab for once?"

Constance looked hopefully at her sister, but Mrs. Trevenning shook her handsome head.

"Impossible! We have promised, for one thing, to call for Helen; and besides, to go there, in a cab! Oh! no I couldn't do that."

"Well, Dudley, think of something else—do," implored his younger sister; she was his favorite, and a very pretty girl. "You might try to help us," she said. Her face was quite tragical, and Sir Dudley, looking at it, laughed.

"Well—I will," he said. "Tell you what I'll do. Get me old Martin's coat and gloves and hat, and I'll drive you myself."

Miss Dare cast a reproachful glance at him as though disbelieving; but Mrs. Trevenning sprang to her feet and clapped her hands.

"The very thing," cried she. "Dudley, you have saved us!" She ran to the bell and rang it sharply. "I'll order the regimentals to your old room, and the carriage to the door at once. If you tuck the rug carefully round your knees nobody will notice your trousers."

"I earnestly hope that no one will notice me," said Sir Dudley. "That's the principal thing!"

"Good Heavens, yes!" said Mrs. Trevenning. "Dear Dudley, do be cautious. Fancy if any one were to recognise you, and it were to come out in one of those detestable society papers. What an imbroglio!" There was a gleam of hope in her eye.

"It would set you up for life," said Sir Dudley calmly. "Consider how you would be run after and pointed out for months to come. What greater bliss could fall to the share of any woman?"

His raillery was kindly, and Mrs. Trevenning, who in secret hankered wildly after notoriety, took no notice of it, beyond making a little moue as she passed him.

Later on, when they interviewed him in the hall preparatory to starting, he was found to be quite satisfactory.

The light tweed trousers certainly militated against the perfection of his toilette, but they trusted to the friendly rug to hide this discrepancy.

"Whatever you do, don't get down," said Mrs. Trevenning, who began to feel something of the delights of private theatricals. "And for goodness' sake, don't forget your role for a moment. When you are opening the door for Helen, be sure you touch your hat."

"Yes M'," said Sir Dudley in the most approved style; after which they all got down to the carriage, two maids full of a decorous hilarity bringing up the rear, armed with cloaks and fans.

The impromptu coachman was directed to drive first to Park Lane to pick up "Helen."

"Who is Helen, what is she?" thought Dudley, to whom the name conveyed no memories; but there was no time just then to ask questions. It was close on eleven o'clock.

He felt rather glad he didn't know the lady mentioned, as, though it would have been difficult to make him feel shame about such an affair as this, he was obliged to confess to himself, once he was seated and had the reins in his hands, that he would be rather glad than otherwise when his self-imposed task was at an end. Yes, he wished himself well out of it.

Why, if any of the other of the four-in-hand fellows were to see and recognize him he should never hear the end of it. And those horses of Trevenning's were not his form at all. "Sorry nags," he called the slow, respectable, well-fed beasts, who went, thought he, as though they were mourning the corpse behind them.

"You will drive quietly, won't you, Dudley?" Mrs. Trevenning had said nervously as a last word. "Not as you do on that dreadful coach. Remember, now, like a darling boy."

The darling boy smiled grimly to himself as he drove along at a funeral pace. It suggested itself to him that if he laid down the rains and gave them their own sweet will they would go as well as he could drive them.

But fortunately he abstained from this experiment, and consequently they arrived safely at the house appointed in Park Lane where the unknown "Helen" was to be picked up.

Almost as they drew up there the hall door was opened and a tall slight figure muffled in an eastern shawl ran down to the carriage.

"At last! I was quite afraid something had happened."

The voice was girlish and very sweet, and had a curious vibration in it that thrilled the hearer. A servant followed her to open the carriage door, and whilst he was doing it Dare caught a glimpse of her face.

Such an exquisite face! Arch yet tender, firm yet soft. He had no time to criticise any special feature, so quickly she turned away and was swallowed up by the carriage but he knew her eyes were as dark as her hair, and that if he lived forever he should never be able to forget that one sweet glimpse.

He heard as if in a dream, some one telling him to go on again, and still in a dream he pursued his way through the lamp-lit streets, and presently drew up before an open doorway that shone more brilliantly than its companions on either side.

He watched her from his post of vantage walk up the carpeted steps and disappear into the hall, and was conscious of a distinct blank when the envious walls hid her from sight.

Another carriage coming up behind obliged him to take the horses out of the way, or probably he would even now have been staring at the steps up which she had gone; circumstances, however, were too many for him, and he was compelled to retire speedily and with as little consideration for the new-born feelings that had sprung to life within him, as though he were in truth the hireling he simulated. How he got through the next few hours he never afterwards remembered. All he could think of was this one fair woman; this Helen, of whom he knew nothing.

Who was she? Was she Miss or Mrs.? His heart contracted as he admitted of the latter title. He could get it all out of Mrs. Trevenning in the morning of course, but in the meantime he was lost in a miserable ignorance.

Oh! Helen fair, beyond compare.

Would he ever know more of her than now he knew? He made one desperate effort to discover her identity, an effort that ended in dismal failure.

Fate drove him up to a respectable middle-aged gentleman in his own (present) rank of life, who, reclining gracefully against an adjacent wall, smoked the peaceful pipe.

Dare all his life had been told that nothing was hid from servants, and the idea grew upon him that perhaps this man might tell him something of the family residing in that particular house in Park Lane from which the lovely Helen had descended.

He made himself very specially charming to the respectable man for five minutes or so, during which he sustained the entire conversation, the respectable man being engrossed with the pipe, and evidently of a taciturn disposition.

He was so reserved, indeed, that he quite won on Dare, who thought him modest, and, for his state of life, refined. After a few preliminaries, therefore, he asked him if he knew who lived in such and such a house, Park Lane.

The refined man had now come to an end of his pipe, and, as Sir Dudley discovered, was more equal to conversation than he had before supposed.

"Blest if I do," said he—"beyant the fact that t'aint my gal's 'ouse. Reason of askin'? Soft on Parlor or Cookie, eh?"

Sir Dudley moved away. He now told himself he had been mistaken, and that the man had very bad manners; and he refrained from questioning any one else. No, he would trust to chance to reveal her to him.

It was the longest night he ever spent. He wondered whether they would ever get tired dancing, and assured himself it was the last time he would place himself in such a predicament.

He thought bitterly of Mrs. Trevenning's staying powers when she found a partner that suited her, and of how Connie would be safe to meet Carlton there, and, given an isolated spot in a conservatory, would straightway forget that such a thing as Time existed.

And Helen! Was she too——? Pshaw! that way madness lay. He would not believe but that he might yet have a chance of trying his fortune with her.

He could not forget her face. It was love at first sight—and a terrible attack of it. He had sneered at such an idea when other men had spoken of it as being not only possible but probable, and now——

Helen! Helen of Troy. Pooh! he didn't believe that old-world beauty could have held a candle to this modern Venus.

He was getting excited over the question, when some friendly person cried aloud for Mrs. Trevenning's carriage, and he drove up with quite a rush, and saw her of whom his thoughts were full come down the steps beneath a blaze of light into the shadow below.

As a matter of fact, five came down at the same moment, but Sir Dudley was too far gone to see more than one; which shows the exact difference that lies in giving way to love, and wine.

Constance Dare was accompanied by one young man who seemed decidedly epris, whilst another hung over "Helen" with an air of devotion that drove Sir Dudley to the verge of frenzy. To go for that man, to wrest from him his prize, was his sole desire.

The reins slackened in his grasp, and he bent forward, oblivious of everything, in his anxiety to see what was going on beneath him. This brought him within the glare of the lamps, and the man talking to Constance, lifting his head suddenly, saw him.

"Why—what?" exclaimed he spasmodically. Miss Dare, following his glance, caught his arm.

"Not a word, not a syllable. To-morrow I'll explain——" whispered she, divided between fear and mirth.

This conquered peril was unknown to Sir Dudley, who still continued to glare at the back of his rival's head, as he already designated "Helen's" companion. Animal magnetism is a power, no doubt, and now it compelled the rival to turn his glance in the direction of Mrs. Trevenning's coachman.

Nothing came of this, however. Dudley caught sight of his face first, and, starting as if shot, faced round and fell into an attitude that was anything but easy, but which permitted him to devote his entire attention to the reins.

It was Tommy Mornington!—colonel in the Coldstreams; and the most notorious gossip about town.

If he were once to get wind of this, and to—to retail it to her in his usual biting sarcastic way—(nasty way, by Jove!)—how should he ever be able to approach her? He kept his face rigidly averted, even from her, and sat in durance vile, until Carlton, Connie's man, called out to him "Home." Was there a sense of smothered laughter in his tone?

He drew up with quite an old coachman-like touch at the house of Mrs. Trevenning who got out of the carriage as did Constance. He waited with an eager longing and a most unservantlike straining of the neck in the direction of the carriage-door to see fair Helen follow them.

His astonishment became intense as he saw she did not appear, and that the other two were leaning towards the window, murmuring good-nights, and good-byes, numberless. He could even see that Mrs. Trevenning leant forward as if to kiss someone, and then drew back and looked up at him.

She was the image of Sir Dudley, and had the same merry daring look in her blue eyes.

"To Park Lane—Dud—Martin," said she and he knew by her expression, which was mischievous, that the slip was a premeditated one, meant to frighten him. But he forgave her—for was she not rendering up to his sole care for a few sweet minutes the one perfect creature upon earth?

He didn't call the horses "sorry nags" this time. Their slowness delighted him. He drove with the utmost caution—the most extraordinary care. It even occurred to fair Helen within that the Trevenning's coachman was a leach of the first water, but he could not bring himself to hurry up the horses even to please her.

They were alone, he and she, as utterly alone in the great heart of town as lover's soul could desire. Separated only by a miserable partition of wood and paint and padding—a trumpery separation, that it delighted him to think he could smash into bits in no time.

In spite of himself, however, he had to get to the house at last, and with a pang he watched the tall slender figure go up to the hall door.

She had left him—and this carriage which from henceforth would be sacred to him. Should he ever see her again, once those doors opened to receive her?

Meantime the senseless doors seemed slow to grasp their prize. Fair Helen knocked, first in a reasonable way, then loudly—then louder still.

She pulled the bell with a marvellous vigor for one so delicate in face and form. But answer came there none. Sir Dudley, very much against his will, sat holding the reins, longing yet fearing to go to her assistance, and glad in the thought that he need not leave her until he saw her safely indoors.

Presently it began to dawn upon him that this would not be immediately.

Again she knocked, again she rang with quite the same result. He was watching her anxiously, and now he saw that she turned her face to him with a suspicion of nervousness in her manner, and as though she found comfort in the knowledge that he was still there.

That glance undid him! The unconscious appeal in her eyes made him oblivious of all other considerations, and springing down from his seat he hastened to her side.

"Allow me," he said gently, and, taking the knocker from her fingers, beat a resounding rat-a-tat-tat upon the door. He was delighted with the knocker.

Action of any sort that would be in her service he was longing for just then, and, nothing else presenting itself, he worked off this longing on the unoffending door.

He was, indeed, so engrossed with his desire to awake the sleeping household that he quite forgot that state of life into which he had entered to oblige his sisters, and was therefore the more startled and confounded when presently he found her eyes fixed upon him with an intensity suggestive of astonishment.

Her expression was a curious blending of surprise and bewilderment, and there was too, he thought, a little uneasiness in it.

It all flashed upon him in a second. There he stood, in the Trevenning livery from the knees up, and for the rest there was light tweed trousers and a pair of boots that servants as a rule do not aspire to!

He became at the same time conscious that his gloves were absurdly too big for him, and that the hat was ludicrous on his head, at all events, whatever it might be on the venerable Martin.

Truly this mad freak of his was costing him dear! In one wild moment he thought to cut and run was all that was left him, but presently he rallied.

"I'm afraid they are all asleep, M'," he said, being so desirous of making a point of the respectful M' that he overdid it terribly, and left matters worse than they were before.

"I am afraid so too," replied she steadily though she still regarded him with an evident distrust, that seemed to grow as the moments waned. "My maid was to have sat up for me, but I suppose she—— Will you knock again, please?"

He did knock again, with redoubled ardor this time. He was as anxious now as she was to get the confounded door open. That distrustful glance had hurt him sorely.

He felt all the time that he was hammering away at the knocker that her eyes were fixed on the unlucky trousers, and as for the hat——

Once again memories rose to make him wretched. He recollected the fatal likeness that existed between him and Mrs. Trevenning, and he jammed down the big hat well over his brow with a view to concealing from her the family features. If he failed in this, he succeeded at all events in making himself grotesque in an unusually high degree.

The knocking rang through the empty air, and dying away left an unnatural silence behind it. The day had broken, and now a still, pale, ghostly light crept slowly over the housetops and trembled through the street.

The sweet cold smell of dawn came to them through all the smoke and depression of the great city beyond, and yet it seemed to them that the beauty of the fresh young morn had something of sadness in it. The stillness was almost oppressive.

Fair Helen stood motionless, a little pale; while Sir Dudley, in his motley garments, waited with throbbing heart for some sound—a footstep—inside this terrible door, that should put an end to a moment so charged with difficulties. What an unearthly quiet! Why did she not say something?

Suddenly, with an appalling yell such as a cat alone can give a lean grimalkin rushed across the street, and disappeared into some unseen corner.

It was a wicked vengeful cry, and so startled fair Helen that she instinctively shrank backwards, and a faint exclamation broke from her lips.

"Oh! will they never open the door?" she said faintly. He caught a hurried glance

so full of nervous suspicion that it horrified him.

Good Heavens! That she should look at him like that. He could not tell, of course that with the hat thus pressed upon his forehead, and coming down almost to his nose, he looked like nothing so much as a burglar, unless it might be a murderer; and felt a rather hurt astonishment that she should so unkindly regard him.

As he still pondered on this there came at last a distant sound from within, nearer it came, until there could be no mistake at all about its being a footstep.

"Ah!" cried she, with such an undeniable air of relief that Dudley knew himself finally crushed.

The door was opened by a frightened sleepy maid, and Helen stepped quickly into the safe shelter of the hall. As she went something fell from her with a tinkling sound upon the pavement. It was her fan. Sir Dudley stooped, picked it up, and handed it to her.

Standing under the hall lamp as she was with some soft lace falling back from her dark head, and with a warm flush upon her cheeks, she looked even lovelier than he had before seen her. Was she as cruel as she was beautiful? Perhaps she saw the touch of reproach in his eyes.

"Oh, thank you," she said hurriedly, taking the fan. She made him a faint hesitating salutation—which afterwards occurred to him as being somewhat strange—and he ——raised his hat! The hat! Martin's hat! It was flabby at the brim, and there was a difficulty about the doing of this every-day act, but certainly he raised it.

Once again the fair Helen fixed upon him a questioning gaze, more boldly this time because of the presence of her maid, and Sir Dudley, with the only bit of wisdom he had betrayed all through, beat a hasty retreat.

As he went home he wondered where he should see her again. Mrs. Trevenning would of course be able to manage it for him, but somehow he decided on saying nothing to either of his sisters about her.

There would be Lady Bellingham's ball to-morrow night—nay, to-night rather. She might be there; and if so, would she recognize him?

This was an awful probability, and yet he could not bring himself to hope she would entirely forget him.

* * * * * * * *

He had just completed a flowery little speech expected of him by Lady Bellingham, who still considered herself young and lovely, and had stepped aside to prop himself against a friendly wall, when he saw "her" enter the room—she was already only that eloquent pronoun to him.

If fair on that last hour he saw her, she was ten times fairer to-night in a lace gown, diaphanous, ivory-tinted, with here and there a purple bunch of the big czar violet lost in its soft folds.

She was smiling, and it seemed to Dare as if he had been blind to the sweetness of her eyes last night. Her skin was like the wildrose, and her hair strayed loosely over a thoughtful and therefore beautiful brow.

He went up to Lady Bellingham presently and asked for an introduction "to the charming girl over there in the white gown."

"They are all in white frocks," said Lady Bellingham, "like a set of silly debutantes. I never saw so much white in a room before. You will have to be a little more explicit."

She spoke petulantly. She was growing stouter every day, and white was now beyond her.

"I wish I could," said Dudley, laughing. "But the fact is, I don't know her name." He had adhered to his resolution not to question his sisters about her. "See, there," he went on hastily—"there she is now with Sir Charles Lamprey."

"Oh! Helen. Helen Bellasis. She is a cousin of mine." She glanced at him with an amused smile. "Another!" she said. "You are the ninth man who has implored my assistance, and she has been only five minutes in the room. She is a great success isn't she? This is her first season, and already everybody wants to marry her."

Sir Dudley's heart rose. She was not married, then! Immediately afterwards it sank to zero. If they were all at her feet, what chance had he?

"Be warned in time," Lady Bellingham was saying gaily. "She is a witch, a siren. Steel your heart, or, better still, flee temptation."

"I feel how good it is of you to take all this trouble about me," said Sir Dudley, mildly. "I am indeed grateful; but," with a sudden smile, "if you can manage that introduction, I shall be even more grateful still."

"You know no fear, then. You think yourself irresistible?" said she with a shrug. "The world has spoiled you." And, indeed Sir Dudley, being without incumbrances and master of a very pretty income, had known what it was to be affectionately treated by dowagers, maidens, and frisky matrons.

"Coming from you, that is unkind," replied he in a low tone. "Have you found me 'irresistible'?" The tender reproach in his tone pleased her.

"Tut!" she said throwing up her handsome head. And then: "Wilful man must have his way, I suppose. Come then, and let me make you known to Helen."

She moved forward, and Dudley followed her. A few moments later saw him standing before Miss Bellasis, her card in his hand.

He had not found the courage to look at her whilst the introduction was going on, but now he stole a glance at her, to find she was gazing at him rather too attentively. He grew honestly confused.

"I have ventured to put my name down here," he said, indicating the solitary vacancy upon her card.

"Yes?" She held out her hand for the card, and leisurely read what he had written. "Do you know," she said slowly, "I have rather a curiosity to know your name." She might mean little or nothing by this speech; she might mean a great deal. Dare felt that he was changing color.

At this particular moment the waltz then being played came to an abrupt end, as some waltzes will, and after a while Sir Dudley, offering her his arm, led her away to a conservatory. The next was a square dance, put in to make happy the middle-aged belles, and Miss Bellasis had declared her disinclination to have anything to do with it.

When in the dimly lit conservatory she sank upon a lounge, opened her fan in a leisurely fashion, and suddenly turned her eyes full on his.

"I can't explain it," she said deliberately, "it is the strangest thing—yet I cannot help fancying that I have seen you somewhere before."

The arrow went home; but he bore the wound with a courage undaunted.

"The most natural fancy possible," he said; "the Row is open to us all, and when one goes to two or three balls in a night why——"

"I do not think it was in the Row or at a ball I met you," interrupted she softly; "though of course," with a presumably backward glance into her memory, "it might have been in the Row. However—it wasn't."

"Perhaps," said he, though he knew he was reddening like a wretched schoolboy, "you can recollect when it was I was so happy as to come within your notice."

"If I could remember, surely you could," she said. She leaned towards him. "Have you ever seen me before?" she asked impressively.

"Seen you?" He repeated her question in a stammering fashion, and then stopped short.

Somehow he felt as if he could not tell her a lie—as if he could not deny the joy he had gained by his first glance at her. He grew silent, and stood there before her frowning perplexedly and most evidently embarrassed.

"Ah! you have," said she.

She moved quickly, and in doing so the lace flounce of her gown was caught and entangled by the prickly leaves of a cactus standing near. She tried to extricate herself from the treacherous grasp, but unsuccessfully. Dudley went hurriedly to the rescue. He bent over her.

"Allow me," he said. The two ordinary words struck an answering chord. When had he last used them? She lifted her head as he set her free, and said quickly—

"Now, I know it!"

He grew rather pale. Did she know it? and whence came that strange little gleam that shone in her eyes?

She did not say anything more or volunteer any information as to this sudden knowledge that had flown in upon her, and Dudley, who was now as one sitting on thorns, made up his mind to learn the worst at once. Anything was better than this nervous suspense.

"So you have found it out," he said. "You have discovered either me—or my double."

"Your double. Certainly not you," she laughed; and reseated herself with all the air of one who is about to tell you a good thing. "Why it is the most absurd fancy," she said, "And you must really promise not to be offended, but the fact is your sister Mrs. Trevenning—she is your sister, isn't she? Well, she has the most eccentric coachman in the world."

"Indeed!" said he. He went down for a moment, and then rose again and struck out boldly. "Is it the eccentric coachman I resemble?"

"Ah! do not be offended at that. You need not. To tell the truth, it is a marvellous resemblance. But there is quite a little history connected with that coachman which, if you like, I shall tell you."

He hastened to say it would give him infinite delight to hear anything from her lips whereupon she ran through a light account of what was already too well known to him.

"Just now," she said as she finished it, "when you said 'Allow me,' it reminded me of the time when he ran up the steps and took the knocker out of my hand without 'by your leave,' or 'with your leave.' Trop de zele it seemed to me, but he seemed a dangerous person to argue with, so I made no protestation. Surely," smiling, "you are not dangerous, and yet"—reflectively—"both in voice and features you resemble him. You must not be angry about this, because, as I have already hinted, he was a coachman quite out of the common."

Again the clear eyes looked into his. Could it be possible for such sweet orbs to betray malicious amusement?

"Of course I am to be congratulated in that he wasn't the ordinary sort," said he with an assumption of cheerful indifference that did him credit.

Miss Bellasis leant back in her chair and played idly with her fan. Was she about to quit the distasteful subject? He racked his brain to try to find something interesting that should help her to this end, but even as he racked it she spoke.

"Do you know," she said innocently, "I think the Trevenning livery is the funniest I know. Who invented it? Whoever it was deserves public recognition. Light-grey trousers and a claret-colored coat with white facings. Surely it is unique."

"I don't know much about it," said he. "I haven't gone into that sort of thing. But certainly what you say does sound uncommonly queer. You should reason with Mrs. Trevenning on the subject, who, it appears, is rather a friend of yours."

"Quite the dearest. We haven't a secret from each other, she and I."

She looked at him as she said this, and whether his expression amused her it would be impossible to say, but at all events she broke suddenly into a low delicious laugh.

"Isn't it nice to have a friend like that?" she asked.

"I think it would be very nice to have a friend like you."

She passed this over hurriedly.

"After all, I don't think I shall speak to Mrs. Trevenning about the livery," said she. "The Trevennings are not new people that they should care what the world says. And besides—— Oh! by-the-by, there is one other thing about that remarkable coachman I quite forgot to tell you. Another touch of eccentricity. When leaving he took off his hat to me. He didn't touch it, you will understand, he really tried to lift it. But it was too much for him, it resisted his most earnest efforts. Poor man! It suggested itself to me this morning that perhaps he had once been in better circumstances; might have been almost a gentleman."

"He might," said Sir Dudley, grimly. He was now in a rage with himself. How on earth had he ever let himself in for such a miserable sell?

To act coachman to his own sisters; there wasn't even the element of romance in it. He might have known he couldn't act the part decently. To take off his hat! What an utter fool he had made of himself!

"I'm sure of it," said Miss Bellasis, warmly. "There was quite a little air in the way he tried to take off that hat. In fact"—she paused and lifted her eyes to his—"I wasn't half surprised enough, when afterwards he put out his hand to bid me good-night!"

"What! Oh! I say, I know I didn't go as far as that," cried Sir Dudley, impetuously.

It was all over then. Too late he stopped short. Miss Bellasis rose to her feet.

"You! What have you to do with it?" demanded she.

"Just this"—his glance grew beseeching—"I was that coachman!"

She moved back, as if in horror.

"You!" she said. And then again—"You! And how, sir, is it that I now see you here masquerading in your master's clothes?"

"No, no! They are my own, I assure you," stammered he; whereupon the sternness she would have sustained fled from her; and the pretty eyes gave place to the laughter that was consuming them. For yet a little while she struggled with herself, and then subsided behind her fan.

"You knew it. You knew it all the time," cried he, reproachfully, yet with a sense of extraordinary relief. He drew away with a determined hand the fan she held, and looked accusatively into her lovely, risante face.

"Not last night indeed," exclaimed she; "acquit me of that. But—this morning ——"

"Yes. Go on. Who told you then?"

"Captain Carlton. He recognized you as you waited so patiently beneath the Duchess's lamps." Patiently, she little knew! "And what are you ashamed of, then?" said she, "it was a mere freak after all, and I, for one, owe you a debt of gratitude; I should not have gone to that ball but for you, and—a man has been known to drive his sisters before this."

"But hardly as their servant. However, I was not ashamed of it until—I saw you."

"Oh! what have I to do with it!" said she. But she had the grace to blush as she said it, and, for the first time, she avoided his eyes.

"Everything. Not only with this absurd episode, but," earnestly, "with my whole life."

It was in effect a proposal, and Miss Bellasis grew very grave.

"We have been here a long time, have we not?" she said, rising slowly. "I am afraid I must ask you to take me back now to my aunt, Lady Bellasis."

"One word," entreated he. "Are you staying with her, with Lady Bellasis? Yes? Then may I call, to-morrow?"

"On her? I am sure"—gravely—"auntie will be very pleased to receive you."

"Ah! said he, "that is something, but it is not enough. Shall I see you? Will you be pleased to receive me?

"You ask a great deal," she said, but she smiled. "Have you forgotten that this is our first meeting?"

"Our second, rather.

"Is that other to be counted? Well, our second then."

One hand was hanging by her side. He took it, and held it gently between both of his own. His face as he did this was so earnest that she could not be angry with him.

"Helen," he besought her, "say you will be glad to see me."

"How do you know my name?" She looked surprised and blushed vividly.

"I heard Constance call you so; and having seen you, how could I forget anything that related to you. Helen! Tell me? I may come to-morrow."

"Yes, come," she answered softly.

Arabella, to new maid: "Now remember, Bridget, if Mr. Brown calls, say I'm not at home; but, if Mr. Smith comes, take him into the drawing-room, and say I'll be down in a moment." Caller: "Ah—is Miss Arabella De Wolf at home?" Bridget, meditatively: "Sure she gave me very particular orders. She says, 'If Mr. Brown calls, say I'm not at home; but, if Mr. Smith comes, take him into the drawing-room, and say I'll be down in a minute.' Now which one are you, sir?"

The Absent Cousin.

BY BERTIE BAYLE.

BUT, Bella, if he should come home full of health and vigor, and as true and kind of heart as he was when he went away, you wouldn't let his want of money stand in the way of your marriage, would you?"

"You talk, Ida, as though I was solemnly betrothed to him!"

"No, no, not that, dear Bella; but you know it was the dearest wish of your mother that you should grow to womanhood and become Philip's wife."

"Oh, bother! what does that amount to?"

"It would amount to much with me, Bella. A reverence of my mother's memory——"

"Your mother's fiddle-stick, Miss Propriety! You were in love with Phil Trevor yourself! And I tell you plainly, Ida, if he comes home with a penny less than ten thousand you may have him and welcome."

"Oh, Bella, you do not mean that! I did love Philip, but never with a thought of marrying him. We were but children at the time. I was only twelve years old, and in short frocks; and Philip was a great stout handsome young man of sixteen."

"And I was fourteen. Quite a marriageable age, wasn't it."

"You were certainly old enough to know whether you liked a youth like Philip Trevor or not."

"Well, I didn't care that for him!" (A snap of the finger and thumb, and a pause) "Still, I might have arrived at that stage where a good fat bank account would have turned the scale."

"Bella, don't let Aunt Martha hear you talk like that. She regards Philip as her own flesh and blood; and, though he has been gone eight years, she thinks of him continually, and is now counting the hours until his home-coming."

"A fig for Aunt Martha, and a fig for your preaching! Wait till the hero comes I shall claim the right of first choice. Should he be worth less than—well, say ten thousand, you may have him and welcome. Ah! Who are you? What are you doing here?"

The foregoing conversation had been going on in a little vine-clad arbor, in Mrs. Martha Cooper's garden. Mrs. Cooper was a widow, still in the prime of life—say about fifty—living very comfortably on the income of her small, unencumbered property, and a widow's pension—widow of a colonel who had lost his life in battle. The speakers had been Bella Mason, aged twenty-two, and Ida Suelling, aged twenty. Ida's mother and Aunt Martha had been sisters.

Bella's mother had been Aunt Martha's cousin. And the father of the Philip Trevor of whom they had been had also been cousin german to Aunt Martha, and the same to Bella's mother; so that he, Philip and Bella were only second cousins. Ida held the same relationship to Philip through her mother that Bella did on her father's side.

Though Philip Trevor's father and Bella Mason's mother had been only cousins, they had loved one another like brother and sister; and for several years after the death of her husband Mrs. Mason had found a home with her Cousin Trevor.

The two—Mrs. Mason and Charles Trevor—had died in the same year—when Philip was fifteen and Bella thirteen—and, as Ida had intimated, it had been Mrs. Mason's earnest wish and hope that her child might become Philip's wife; for she had read the boy's character deeply and critically, and felt assured of his sterling manhood.

And Charles Trevor, though not so earnest in the matter as was his cousin, yet was pleased with the thought that Bella Mason would be his son's wife.

Mr. Trevor had died first, leaving his little property so encumbered that by the time the estate was settled only a few hundred pounds were left.

They kept the house, however, while Mrs. Mason lived and when she had passed away, Philip found himself in his sixteenth year, and well-nigh penniless.

Shortly thereafter Bella went to live with Aunt Martha; and six months later Philip went abroad.

He kissed Aunt Martha and wept on her bosom; for she had been as a mother to him since he could remember. He also kissed Bella; and when he had done so, she said to him with a laugh:

"Come home rich, Philip, and I'll be your wife."

And then he had looked for Ida. Where was she? Ah! He found her at length out in the little orchard, sitting under a pear-tree, crying bitterly. She had clung to him when he had kissed her, and smiling through her tears, earnestly prayed.

"May God and all good angels bless you, Philip, and bring you back safe and well."

And then he had gone. They had heard from him many times—most of his letters, however, had been to Aunt Martha—but never a word of what he was doing, or how. At one time he would be here; at another there; and at still another somewhere else.

His last letter, received by Aunt Martha only the day previous to that on which we find the girls in the garden arbor, had said that he should very soon start for the old home. He had written that he was well, and that he had worked hard; but not a word—not a syllable—about whether he was rich or poor.

One word more in relation to these two girls. Bella Mason had lived with good Aunt Martha ever since her mother's death and the only labor she performed was to help "the dear old soul"—that was her aunt—about her lighter house-work. She

scarcely ever worked in the kitchen. In fact, she could be scarcely classed as a worker in anything. She was a lady.

Aunt Martha had offered her sister's child—Ida Snelling—a home beneath her roof; but the pure minded, noble hearted, truly proud girl would not take it. She had received a splendid education, and she made it support her.

Sue had been assistant teacher in an intermediate school in a neighboring town since her mother's death—her father had died several years before the mother—and she spent her vacations and holidays always with her dear aunt. She loved Aunt Martha—loved her with all her heart and all her soul, and she was never so happy as when her two arms were around the dear one's neck, and her sunny head pillowed on the faithful bosom.

It was a laborer in the garden to whom Bella had spoken so roughly and so unkindly; a young man, poorly clad, and evidently one of the waifs of the wide, wide world. His brown face had a sad, pained look; and Ida had at once felt interested in him.

She thought if his skin had not been so coarse and freckled, and his hair so intensely red and thick, he would have been really handsome. He had good features; and his eyes, when she chanced to gain a fair look into them, were wonderfully deep and beautiful. Surely a man with such eyes must be intelligent.

"Fair lady," he said, in a low, struggling voice, with a touch of the outlandish in his idiom, "I am a poor man, as you can see. The gardener on the place gave me a few days' work. I was not listening. My work called me here, and——"

"There, that's enough! I don't want to hear any more. Take yourself out of this we are gone!"

"Oh, Bella!—hush, hush!"

"Ida, I'm surprised at you! Would you take the part of every ragamuffin that happened to be about when he isn't wanted, listening to what his betters are——"

"Hush! Oh, Bella, he will hear you!"

"What isn't he gone yet? What are you stopping here for? Didn't I tell you to go?"

"But the gardener bade me to stay. Whom shall I obey?"

"You'll obey me. Be off; and don't let me see your ugly face again!"

The man bowed very low, looking straightly into Bella's face, and then, having shot a glance at Ida that thrilled her through and through, he shouldered his hoe and rake, and turned to depart.

"Mind, don't come back!" called Bella after him.

She did that simply because she was angry with herself, and perhaps the man's coolness had nettled her.

"Good riddance!" she snapped out, after he had gone. "I wonder what possessed old Hodges to engage such a fellow! Ida, what are you looking at? What are you thinking of? Have I frightened you?"

The young girl started as from a dream, and returned her cousin's look.

"No," she said, after a little thought; "you didn't frighten, but you hurt me—you pained me, Bella, you—you ought not to have done it. He will tell Hodges, and Hodges will tell Aunt Martha, and you know her good and kind wife is."

"Oh, pshaw! Why, I never set the rascal again, right before us! He's been and done and is at his tricks, and come back! Oh, if I had a whip I'd see how long he'd stay on those grounds!"

And with that, Bella Mason sprang to her feet and out from the arbor; but the offender had gone. He was just passing out by the turnstile at the corner of the hothouse.

The girls moved on towards the house without speaking. Bella was angry with herself and with Ida; and the thought that her aunt would certainly blame her if she knew how strangely she had been behaving, made her almost angry with her also.

The kind-hearted old lady had striven hard to soften her manners, and especially to moderate her speech towards those below her in the walks of life, with what success we can readily imagine.

As they came near to the dwelling—a pretty white cottage, with a verandah along its whole front and at one end—what should they see but the red-headed laboring man conversing with Aunt Martha! The two stood near the steps of the front verandah, before the main entrance; but the man went away immediately after they had come in sight.

"Do you suppose he has been and told Aunt what I said to him?"

"I don't believe he has done any such thing, Bella. He did not look like a tattler."

"Well, Ida, I'd like to know where, in that mass of tan and freckles and red wool, you found anything in his favor!"

"In his eyes, Bella, and in his whole face for that matter. I thought his features really handsome, and his eyes were magnificent."

"His eyes! I only saw that they were about the most impudently staring eyes I ever saw. And as for his other features, a handsome horse might have a more manly face!"

They found their aunt in the cozy little drawing room, looking very solemn when she glanced up as they entered, but did not speak.

"Aunt," demanded Bella, in an offended tone, "what is the matter with you?"

"With me, Bella? Why do you ask?"

"Why, you look as solemn as a gravedigger. What is it?"

"I feel solemn, my dear girl. Let that satisfy you for the present."

"Look here, aunt, has that red-headed booby been telling you what I said to him in the garden?"

"No, Bella, he has not. But I wish you would tell me."

"I'd as lief tell you as not. He was sneaking and listening while Ida and I were talking; and I told him what I thought of him; and I didn't mince matters, neither. I think he understood me."

"He certainly did understand you, Bella. At all events, he will work for me no more."

"Good riddance, say I!" cried the irate girl, spitefully; and with that she turned and stamped her way out of the room.

"Oh, Aunt Martha, I am so sorry! I could have cried with a good relish when I saw the poor man turn away. He was not listening. I do not like to dispute Bella, but right is right; and I will not lend myself to the wrong, even by silence. The man was quietly at work, but Bella had been speaking loudly, and very, very foolishly, and when she saw that he must have overheard she was angry—more angry with herself, probably, than with anybody else."

"Dear child!" whispered the old lady, drawing the fair young head to her bosom, and winding her arms closely around the plump, healthful form; "my heart's darling—I am glad you were kind to him."

"Oh! how could I help it, aunt? In the first place, there was something in the man's face that commanded my respect; and in the next place, as you know, I always strive to make better and brighter the lot of those in misfortune; and that he has been unfortunate his looks plainly showed."

Aunt Martha assented with a kiss, and then the subject was dropped.

During the remainder of that day, and into the evening—through the evening—Bella scarcely opened her lips to speak. If she did so, it was with a sigh and a snarl.

But two days later the sun burst forth! Philip Trevor had arrived in London, and a man who ought to know had said that he was worth somewhere about a hundred thousand pounds, certainly as much as that.

Bella was in high spirits, and she looked for her most becoming dress, and got Ida to dress her hair in the most bewitching manner.

As for Ida herself, her summer vacation was almost at an end; but Aunt Martha would not let her go until Philip had come.

And Philip came. A cab drew up at the door, and he—or somebody—entered the house.

The girls came down from Bella's room where they had been waiting, and found Aunt Martha in the arms of a strong young man splendidly dressed, with the form of an Apollo.

He turned as they entered, and came towards them with a warm, kindly loving smile.

It was to Ida he first offered his hand. Oh, what a handsome man he was! His hair was glossy brown and curling, his skin somewhat dark from exposure, but as soft and clear as a woman's.

And yet they knew him! The absence of the red wig, with its coarse tangle lying low on his expansive brow, and the washing away of the unseemly freckles, and the exchange of clothing, could not hide from them the poor man with the hoe and rake, whom they had met in the garden.

Bella gave one long, searching look, and as she met the pained, reproachful glance of those eloquent gray eyes she sank into a chair, bursting forth as she did so:

"Oh, Aunt Martha! You knew! You knew! Oh! how could you?"

"Bella," replied the old lady, in sorrow and sadness, "I did know, but I was not at liberty to tell. It was the dear boy's own wish—his own plan; and he bade me to be silent. Surely he had every right to employ so simple and innocent a test, where the happiness of a life time was involved. If it has resulted unfortunately to yourself, I think your own good sense will tell you where to lay the blame."

While Aunt Martha had been thus speaking, Philip had advanced to Ida, and taken her hand.

"Ida, do you remember the parting words you spoke when I went away?"

"Yes," she answered, in a whisper trembling from heat to fear.

"Well, God and the good angels have blessed me, darling; and I have come back safe and well. Will you add to the crowning blessing by giving me this dear hand for my own? Your heart is already mine, I am sure; as mine has been yours longer than I can tell."

Alas, poor Bella! For a time she would not forgive them for the wrong she felt they had done her. She even went so far as to declare that Ida had been in the plot from the first. But in time she softened and came down from her isolation of indignation. She found that she alone suffered. And when Philip and Ida were married she was one of the bridesmaids, and heartily, and, let us hope, lovingly, kissed both groom and bride.

A CLERK in Louisville invested $500 in pork at a bucket-shop the other day and succeeded in running it up to $5000. Then he determined to make it $10,000 and quit and get married. His $5000 crept up almost to the desired amount, and then the market took a turn against him and in a few hours he didn't have even the original $500. He will not marry this Spring.

A little girl, aged four, was sitting with a doll in her lap and a basin of water by her side. "What are you going to do with the doll?" asked her mother. "Baptize her," replied the child. "Oh, you must not play at christening," returned her mother, "it is a sacred subject." "Then I'll have make her marama, that is not a sacred subject."

WAYS OF GREAT MEN.

Suetonius said that during the winter, Augustus would wear four tunics besides a thick toga; to these were added a shirt and a woolen undergarment; his limbs also were as carefully protected. In summer he would sleep with both doors and windows open, and frequently under the peristyle of his palace, where jets of fresh water refreshed the air, and where, moreover was posted a slave whose duty it was to fan him. He could not endure the sun—not even the winter sun—and he never walked abroad without a broad brimmed hat on his head.

Ferdinand II., Grand Duke of Tuscany, who died in 1670; says the Abbe Arnauld in his "Memoirs," "was the slave of his health. I have frequently seen him pacing up and down his room between two large thermometers, upon which he would keep his eye constantly fixed, unceasingly employed in taking off and putting on a variety of skull caps of different degrees of warmth, of which he had always five or six in his hand, according to the different degrees of heat or cold."

The Abbe de St. Martin, who, in the seventeenth century, rendered himself so ridiculous with his pretentious and his mania, always wore nine skull caps on his head to keep off the cold, with a wig over all, which, by the way, was always awry and dishevelled, so that his face never appeared to be in its natural position.

In addition to his nine skull caps he wore also nine pairs of stockings. His bed was made of bricks, underneath which was built a furnace, so constructed as to impart the precise degree of heat he might require. This bed had a very small opening through which the Abbe used to creep when he retired at night.

Fourier, the learned French mathematician, had returned from Egypt a martyr to rheumatism, and with constant sensation of cold; he suffered dreadfully whenever exposed to an atmosphere lower than twenty degrees Reaumur.

A servant followed him everywhere with a mantle in readiness for any sudden change of temperature. During the latter years of his life, exhausted by an asthma from which he had been a sufferer from his youth, he kept himself, for the purpose of writing and speaking to his friends, enclosed in a species of box, which permitted no deviation of the body, and left at liberty only his head and hands.

Donatello, the Florentine sculptor, who died in 1461, among other singularities, had the habit of keeping his money in a basket which hung from a nail in the wall of his room. [illegible] his workmen and from it used to dip at discretion.

Beethoven had two imperious habits by which he was constantly swayed—that of moving his lodgings, and that of walking. Scarcely was he installed in an apartment ere he would discover some fault in it, and commence looking for another. Every day after dinner, despite rain, wind, hail, or snow, he would issue forth on foot, and take a long and fatiguing walk.

Socrates did not blush to play with children: Tycho Brahe diverted himself by polishing glasses for all kinds of spectacles; D'Audilly, the translator of Josephus, after seven or eight hours' study every day, amused himself in cultivating trees. Isaac amused himself with a collection of crayon portraits; Politian in singing airs to his lute. When Petavius was employed in his "Dogmata Theologica," a work of extreme erudition, his great recreation was, at the end of every second hour, to twirl his chair for five minutes.

Dr. Samuel Clark used to amuse himself by jumping over the chairs and tables; Dean Swift exercised himself by running up and down the steps of the Deanery, and even in his latter days, when his constitution was almost broken down, he was, says Dr. Johnson, on his legs ten hours of a day.

TO MAKE 'EM LAUGH.—A theatrical manager, writing of the opinion that the old-fashioned chorus, or company of paid applauders, is not merely untrustworthy and expensive but lamentably unscientific as well, writes to a New York paper to say that he has hit upon a far more improved and really scientific method of putting his audiences into a good humor with themselves and all around them. By means of a tube—the aperture of which will be cunningly concealed from view—he intends to introduce into his theatres, etc., occasional whiffs of laughing gas so contrived that they shall insensibly dispose his patrons to listen with sympathy to his little jokes, and to look with proper appreciation upon his hitherto undervalued efforts as a comic actor. Laughing gas is all very well for comedy and farce, but it will scarcely be of much service when the enterprising manager plays tragedy at his theatre. Nitrous oxide would, indeed, be absolutely ruinous on these nights. Should this ingenious gentleman wish, however, to melt his audience to tears, his cleverness will, no doubt, prompt him to employ servants to surreptitiously peel onions in the parquet while the injured heroine is dying in consequence of the hard-hearted cruelty of the villain of the piece.

One of the singular projects to which the Forty-ninth Congress turned a deaf ear was that to appropriate a sum of money for digging a hole 3,000 feet deep, or as much more or less as the funds might warrant, in each State and Territory. The memorial of the author of this happy thought promised a general revival of industry as one of its results, and only asked for $4,000,000, being $100,000 for each State and Territory, to carry it out. Its immediate object was "getting useful knowledge or discovering valuable minerals."

AT HOME AND ABROAD.

Last year tax was paid on 3,510,898,488 cigars. The average smoker is content with a cigar worth $30 per thousand, or one that rets is at 5 cents. On that basis there annually goes up in smoke $180,000,000, or $15,000,000 every month, or $500,000 every day. In addition, boys waste on cigarettes $6,500,000, and those who prefer a pipe a further sum of $20,000,000.

The importations of tin into the United States amount to about six million dollars' worth of tin plate. There has been no development of tin in our mining sections until recently, where tin ore of first quality and in abundance has been found in Dakota. The first tin mill in the United States has been erected at Black Hills by a firm of New York capitalists. The capacity is two hundred tons in twenty-four hours. If this enterprise shall prove successful, the supply of this product and manufacture will be of immense advantage to the country. Thirty or forty million dollars saved to the country eventually would be no mean yearly addition to its wealth.

There has been a remarkable growth of silk industry in Mexico. There are now three or four well equipped factories in the Republic, and the raw material is yet insufficient to supply their demands. One of the things that makes it possible to go on with the silk manufacture in Mexico is the fact that labor is cheap. Women get thirty-seven and a half cents per day, men $1. Silk can be manufactured in Mexico for one-half what it costs in Paris. One factory last year turned out thirty thousand pounds of silk. This firm proposes soon to be able to manufacture the four hundred and eighty different colors that are used in the manufacture of silk. Experts say that the climate of Mexico is better adapted to the silk worm than most any other on the globe.

According to the "Medical Record," Dr. Jobar has published a work on the cause and frequency of left-handedness. No purely left-handed race has ever been discovered, although there seems to be a difference in different tribes. Seventy per cent. of the inhabitants of the Punjab use the left hand by preference, and the greater number of Hottentots and Bushmen of South Africa also use the left hand in preference to the right. Dr. Marro, as a result of his study of criminals, has discovered that from fourteen to twenty-two per cent. of those who have been convicted of crime were left-handed, the highest ratio among people of all classes being only nine in the hundred.

The French medical journals have been recently discussing the relation of the teeth to the brain; and their conclusions are of considerable importance to all brain-workers. It seems to have been clearly established that excessive and prolonged mental labor causes the teeth to decay by consuming the phosphates which would otherwise nourish the dental structures, and Dr. Championniere therefore recommends that parents and guardians should pay close attention to the condition of the teeth of those under their care, and [illegible] their charges a holiday. We have already been told by men of science that the human race of the future will be short-sighted and hairless. If it is to be also toothless, life in the ages to come will be scarcely worth living.

There are 700 hundred religious and denominational newspapers published in the United States, and nearly one-third of them are printed in New York, Philadelphia, Boston and Chicago. New York is far ahead in this respect, but Chicago leads Boston. Three newspapers are devoted to the silk-worm, six to the honey-bee, and not less than thirty-two to poultry. The dentists have eighteen journals, the photographers nine, and the deaf and dumb and blind nineteen. There are three publications exclusively devoted to philately, and one to the terpsichorean art. The Prohibitionists have nearly one hundred and fifty organs to the liquor dealers' eight. The woman suffragists have seven, the candy-makers three. Gastronomy is represented by three newspapers, gas by two. There are about six hundred newspapers printed in German, and forty-two in French. The towns which have most French periodicals are New York, New Orleans and Worcester, Mass.,—four a piece. There are more Swedish prints than French. Two daily newspapers are printed in the Bohemian tongue. There is one Gaelic publication, one Hebrew, one Chinese, and one in the Cherokee language. All of these possess a direct interest to philosophers and students of sociology. There is no better gauge and regulator of American civilization than the newspaper directory.

BILLINGS, meeting Baxter, who is walking rapidly along the street: "Hallo, Baxter why this rush?" Baxter: "I am walking fast to keep that fellow Staggs from catching me up. He's an awful bore!" Billings, meeting Staggs, who is walking slowly: "Hallo, old fellow—why are you dawdling along in this way?" Staggs: "To keep from catching up that fellow Baxter. He's the worst bore in town!"

An old lady being called into court as a witness, got vexed at the lawyer; and declared: "If you don't stop asking questions I'll leave!" And then added, "You're the most inquisitive man I ever saw in all the days of my life."

Our Young Folks.

PINK, YELLOW AND BLUE.

BY E. M. WATERWORTH.

ROO-too-too too-too-whit!"

"That is dear Punch's sweet,squeaky voice—my own Punch!" Nelly cried out, and dragged her hand away from the nurse, and across the street to the corner where the crowd was.

She got in amongst the crowd and heard the whistling reed and the drum, and saw the red Punch up in the show with dog Toby.

Toby had a paper collar on, of pink and yellow and blue, and he was sitting up trying to snap at Punch's nose, while Punch was holding his little stick between his two hands, and shaking it at Toby, while he squeaked—

"Roo-too-too-too-too-whit! Why does he bite me? He bites me because he likes me—he likes me."

"You naughty child! Little ladies never stand to see Punch and Judy. Come along this minute!"

Nelly said, "good-bye, poor Punch," and she fancied he turned his head to look after her. "I wish I was not a little lady,then," she said; "because he is such a very nice Punch."

Nurse was shocked at such a wish. She told Nelly that if every she stopped again in the street to see the Punch and Judy show, all her dolls would be taken away, and she should have to stand in the corner for a whole evening.

Now the puppet Punch, with the long nose and chin, and the pointed cap, and the red coat, was really alive, though nobody knew it—not even the man that stood in the show-box and moved him, nor the other man outside beating the drum, with the reed across his mouth. Even Toby did not know it, so it must have been a great secret.

He saw the little girl who called him her dear Punch, and he heard her say "good-bye" when she had to pass him; so he watched for Nelly every day, though no one knew it, and he thought of Nelly all night when he was doubled up in the wooden box with the other puppets.

"If he could only send that dear little girl a valentine," he thought one night. "He knew where she lived; he had seen her go in. Yes; he would send her a valentine."

The showman slept in the room where the box of puppets was kept, and that night a noise woke him. The fire was not yet gone out, and in the firelight he saw that Punch had tumbled right out of his box.

So he got up and put Punch in again. Punch croaked all over; he was groaning, and there was a sound like a little sigh when he was stuffed back into the box.

When the showman went to sleep again another noise woke him. He saw the glue-pot on the fire—the glue-pot that he used when he mended the puppets.

And Punch was out of the box again, and lying in a lomb sit-up sort of way across the fender. What was more, Toby had crept from under the bed, and was on the hearth-rug watching.

"You bad dog," said the showman. "You must have pulled that puppet out of the box. Get under the bed and lie down, sir!"

The showman put Punch in the box again, and Punch creaked worse than ever, because this time he was stuffed down under all the others, and he wondered if he could ever get out.

When the man was asleep, it took a whole hour before Punch had struggled to the top of the box and tumbled out on the floor.

About five minutes after that the man was wakened by Toby growling and scuffling about. He saw Toby running backwards up and down the room, dragging Punch after him.

"Toby! drop it sir! Lie down!" the man shouted.

Toby shrank away under the bed; and there was Punch, lying in the middle of the floor with his red sleeves and his little wooden hands entangled in the dog's paper collar.

The man was so tired that he left the puppet there,and he left the glue pot on the fire too; he thought he must have forgotten to put it away, though, as a fact, he had put it away that evening in the corner, after glueing Judy's head on—Judy had been broken that day.

The man was so tired that he slept very soundly now, and the puppet took a sheet of paper and glued Toby's paper collar on to it, all crumpled together in a kind of pink and blue and yellow star. Then the puppet folded the paper, and hid it inside his scarlet coat.

Next morning Toby's collar was missing, and the man blamed Toby, which was very unjust, again.

And when the showmen were out that day they lost Punch in moving from one street corner to another, and a little boy came running after them with the lost puppet.

He said he had found Punch sitting down against the wall of the post-office; so they thought they must have dropped him, and they did not know he had run away to post his valentine.

Nelly got a very queer valentine that everybody laughed at. It was directed in red paint to "Number ten, Grove Road—for the little girl who says, 'good-bye, poor Punch!'"

The valentine was a crumpled star of yellow and pink and blue, glued in a very untidy way to a large piece of paper, and there was painted under it with red paint—

"With the love of the Little Prince."

People thought some one had noticed how Nelly liked the show,and had sent her this queer valentine to make fun of her. But Nelly did not think so.

She had read fairy tales, and she began to wonder who the Little Prince could be. Was it a fairy prince, who had seen her liking for the show, and who had taken a fancy to her for saying "good-bye" to the puppet?

Nelly thought of a beautiful fairy prince, such as she saw in the picture-book, and hoped he had white plumes and gold armor, and a sword in a belt blazing with jewels.

As he had sent her a valentine, she fancied he would some day come and see her. She would ask him for a white horse for her father, and a diamond as big as the nursery teapot for her mother, and a fairy purse for herself that would be always full of pocket-money. Then she would be able to buy the big wax doll from the toy-shop around the corner.

She told all she thought of to her father and mother; and so they found out everything she wished for. The fifteenth of February was Nelly's birthday; and as everybody knows, the fifteenth of February comes just after Valentine's Day.

The big wax doll from the toy-shop around the corner was Nelly's present; and in the evening there was a party, and the Punch and Judy show was engaged to amuse the children.

The drawing-room was crowded. The children laughed and screamed with delight. Never was Punch so beaming; never was there so much rapping and squeaking; never was Toby so clever.

But towards the end of the play Nelly brought her new doll to the front row of chairs—a beautiful doll in white, with golden hair; and for a moment the children forgot the show and admired the doll.

"She is my very own," said Nelly, giving the doll a hug in her arms, "my darling Goldenhair. You must not be jealous, Goldenhair; I love you ever so much more than Punch and Judy."

The moment after she spoke there was a crash and a cry from all the children. Punch had fallen out of the show-box, and lay smashed on the floor.

The men said their best puppet was broken, and it was a loss; so Nelly's father, being very kind, gave them enough money to buy a new one.

Nelly put away her doll, and gathered up the broken pieces, and laid them on a table, all matched together.

"Poor old Punch," she said. "What do you think, papa Could we mend him?"

"I am afraid not," said her father. "We might have glued on his head again, but he is all smashed in pieces."

The showmen were going away, and all the children ran in the hall to say "good-night." But Nelly stayed with the broken puppet, and carried all the pieces up to the nursery in her long pinafore.

"My own poor little Punch," she said. "I am so sorry for you."

And as they passed the landing window, where the moonlight was shining in, Punch saw tears in her eyes.

Very late that night Nelly went up to the nursery to look again at the broken puppet, and see if he could not be mended. She had been playing all the evening, and it was hours past bed-time, so she was very sleepy.

She thought the others would not miss her just for five minutes, while she sat in the easy chair and tried to match the pieces of Punch together.

"Poor old Punch," she said. "There; you look quite nice now, if you could only be glued together."

"As I glued your valentine," said a little squeaky voice.

"Was it you that sent the valentine," said Nelly, looking in disappointment at the ugly, funny puppet, with the long nose and chin. "I thought it was a fairy prince. You are not a little prince, so why did you write that to me?"

"I am a prince—and a fairy prince," said the little squeaky voice.

"No," said Nelly; "you are only the dear ugly Punch out of the show."

"But princes are not all handsome," said poor Punch. "I had the heart of a prince, and nobody knew it. They put me out of Fairyland this time last year, because I quarrelled and hit the others, and I had to be Punch for a whole year, always hitting puppets in a Punch and Judy box. But Punch is broken now, and I am going back to be a prince again in Fairyland."

Nelly thought she had better ask him at once for the white horse, and the diamond as big as the teapot, and the fairy purse.

But he shook his head, and shook himself all to pieces.

"No; you were sorry when you found it was only me that sent you the valentine. No, no! you thought no one was a prince unless he was handsome."

"But I was fond of you, Punch," said Nelly.

The last squeak came from Punch—

"You forgot old friends for new ones."

Just then Nelly woke up. Her mother had found her asleep in the arm-chair, with the broken puppet in her lap.

"Was it all a dream?" said Nelly.

But it could not have been all a dream, because she had still the valentine made out of pink and blue and yellow paper. And so she had known too late that the ugly funny puppet had the heart of a prince.

He was gone back to Fairyland, and only the broken wood and the red coat were here. Good-bye, poor Punch.

JEROME'S ADVENTURE.

BY LUCY FARMER.

ONCE upon a time there was a man who kept a menagerie—you know what a menagerie is?—and in it were several great animals and some smaller ones.

This man who owned the menagerie, or traveling Zoological Garden, was kind; so was his wife. They had one little child, a boy; and at the time of my story this child was two years old, or thereabouts—a fine, chubby little boy, who was pleased with beasts and birds, and would laugh and chat with them in his own little way until even the mischievous monkeys were glad to see him.

The menagerie travelled through the country. It was in France. People came to see the performing elephant and the other creatures, and watched little Jerome ride Hercules—that was the elephant's name—and play a few tricks.

I have told you that the man who owned the menagerie was good and kind. So he was; but he had enemies, and one enemy in particular—a lazy, idle man, who had once owned this very menagerie, but who was too idle and cruel to keep it.

So he sold the animals, and spent the money in idleness. But when he saw how well the other man was getting on, how much money *he* was making, and how the animals liked *him*, and when he remembered that he himself could never do this, he got very angry.

He was greedy and jealous; he did not want to work, yet he wanted money, and was angry with Jerome's father for making a success of what he (Maitait) only failed in. This Maitait said he would be "revenged."

What do you think he did?

It was a bad, wicked action, and only a cruel man would have thought of such a thing. He printed bills, and let all the people know that on a certain day, in a certain town, Mr. Bonnet's little son would go into the panther's den, and sit there.

Do you know why he did this?

"Because," said he to himself, a "great number of people will come to see the show, and I am sure Bonnet will not let his boy go into the cage. Then the people will be angry, and pull down the show, perhaps, or do some damage."

When the menagerie reached the town, Mr. Bonnet, Jerome's father was very much surprised to see the bills saying that his dear little Jerome would go into the cage with the lioness and the panther, which lived together, and sit with the savage beasts.

His wife was in a terrible way. She cried and begged her husband to find out who had done such a wicked thing.

The people were rough, and liked rough scenes. They wanted to see the little boy in the cage, and even if the panther tore him they would not have cared.

The menagerie was fixed up; all the caravans with the cages were arranged as usual, and early in the afternoon a great crowd of rough men came, and women and children, to see little Jerome sit in the cage.

Mrs. Bonnet wanted to tell the people it was a mistake, but her husband said—

"They will tear us to pieces, perhaps, or burn the menagerie in their disappointment. I must see what I can do."

The people came in and crushed about. Mr. Bonnet had fed the animals, and they were quiet. Hercules, the elephant, walked about, Jerome played his pranks, and then the people began to call out for the "cage trick," as they said.

Then Mr. Bonnet made them a speech. He said he had not printed the bills, and it was done without his knowledge. It had been done by some enemy, who would be punished, no doubt, some day. "But if the people insisted——"

"Yes! yes!" they insisted. He must put the child in the cage!

Then Mr. Bonnet got very faint. He did not dare refuse, and yet his heart was sad. His dear little son might be torn in pieces, but he must do as the people said, or the whole menagerie might be destroyed by them.

So he said:

"Very well, ladies and gentlemen; for to-day only I will permit this, and then I will find out the man who has tried to ruin me, and will have him punished."

The people cried "Hurrah!" and his father took Jerome and bade him say his prayers. Then he asked:

"Are you afraid of the beasts?"

"No, father, not a bit!" said the brave boy.

So his father took him off the elephant, and opened the cage. The animals never stirred! Shall I tell you why? They had had a good dinner, with something to make them sleep, and Hercules, the elephant, was looking at them so hard, that they were afraid.

Little Jerome had been kind, and the two animals never moved nor growled as he sat down; but he did not touch them.

There he sat; the people cheered, and cried "Hurrah!" They threw money into the cage. The elephant picked some of it up, and gave it to Jerome, who came out safely!

In the evening he went in again; the lioness and the panther never moved a paw against him, and so on for four times he went in, and made a great deal of money.

The wicked Maitait was very angry, and said,

"The animals are stuffed, not alive."

So the people made him go, and pushed him in! The lioness never moved! "Ah!" he said; "you see, it's all shain!"

But the panther knew him. It knew his cruel old master's voice; and as he was going away it turned and sprang on him! His legs were fearfully hurt, and one had to be cut off. So he was punished well for his cruelty.

The little Jerome never went into the cage again; and when he grew up he had quite forgotten all about his adventure with the panther and the lioness.

EATEN BY BIRDS.—When the time for the fatal moment approaches, the dying Parsee, in India, is carried down to the lower room in the house.

Afterwards his dead body is taken to a lofty interment tower, there to be blown upon by the winds of Heaven, shone on by the blazing sun, beaten by the falling rain, and lie at the mercy of ugly carrion creatures of the wing.

Those who are rich amongst the Parsees have a private burial tower of their own, which answers to the American purpose of a family mausoleum.

Of what may be called the public burial towers there are five, which stand about ten yards high, and twenty feet wide.

Upon the top of each of these ghastly places of open sepulture is a large grating; the bodies of the dead are laid in triune circles, the men being at the outer edge, the women next, and the children in the centre.

Overhead, when a body is brought up, innumerable birds hover with piercing cry.

Then, as climatic influence and the slow decay of time write their influence upon all that was mortal, the bones of the dead, whitened by the fleeting course of the seasons, and picked clean by ravenous birds of prey, gradually drop through the iron bars, leaving room for fresh dead.

Our method of interment, within the cold, dark recesses of the earth, is a cold one; but the Parsee method of performing the funeral rites is much more loathsome.

BISMARCK ON JOURNALISM.—Bismarck the great German chancellor expresses no elevated opinion of the profession of journalism. The remark which he once made in Parliament, that journalists were men who had missed their vocation, was only the essence of an opinion which was expressed to a man of letters in 1862, and which has now found its way into a Paris journal. He said:

"In my opinion there is nothing in the world more useless than newspapers. They only serve to create strife among men and between Governments. Instead of directing public opinion they mislead it. Instead of providing for future historians a chronicle of events, they spread abroad false news or pervert facts by enveloping them in factitious surroundings. And all that because journalists have only learned one thing—to write well; and because they know nothing of the world, and, above all, nothing of politics. The heel of my boot knows more than they do. They speak like oracles on matters about which they are entirely ignorant. If I were the Government I would restrict them to recording simple facts; I would forbid them all discussion,or I would suppress them, which would be better."

GOLD LEAF.—The gold applied to the edges of books, etc., is used in the same state as for various ornamental purposes, namely, as an extremely thin leaf. Before the case or cover of the book is quite finished, the volume is struck forcibly against the back, so as to make the fore edge flat instead of concave. It is then placed in a press, with the exposed edge uppermost. The edge is scraped smooth with a piece of steel, and covered with a mixture of red chalk and water. The gold is blown out from small books, and spread on a leather cushion, where it is cut to the proper size with a smooth-edged knife. A camel's-hair pencil is dipped into white of an egg mixed with water, and with this the partially dry edge of the book is moistened; the gold is then taken up on a tip brush, and applied to the moistened edge, to which it instantly adheres. When all the three edges have been gilt in this way, and allowed to remain a very few minutes, take a burnisher formed of a very smooth piece of hard stone (usually blood-stone), and rub the gold very forcibly. This gives the gold a high degree of polish.

SOME USEFUL TREES.—In the island of Ceylon is a tree that flowers only in the night; and a fruit the year round as soon as the sun rises the petals close or drop off. Its name is the "borrowtin." tree. The "life" tree is to be found in Jamaica, and is so called because as soon as its leaves are plucked off they grow on again; it can be destroyed by fire alone. The "camphor" tree flourishes in Japan and some of the Pacific islands; the camphor forms in lumps in the trunk of the tree. The island of Fierro, one of the Canaries, has a tree constantly surrounded by a cloud which it condenses into water-drops. This is the sole water supply in the island. The "butter" tree belongs to Central Africa, and from the kernel of the fruit is made butter, which, Livingston says will keep for a year. The "manna" tree is tapped about August, when its sap flows; this sap hardens by evaporation into manna. Calabria and Sicily possess these trees. The maple "sugar" tree is similarly tapped in the spring, the sap being collected and boiled down.

A PRINT to analyst in London has called attention to the necessity for the consumers of tinned foods to eat them the same day that the tins are opened. The foods very rapidly begin to decompose, and form poisonous products.

AN EVENING PIPE.

BY E. A. B.

'Tis only of clay, with a stem and bowl,
And a wreath of smoke ascending:
A reverie stealing over my soul,
With a flood of thoughts that ceaseless roll
While the present and past are blending.

A chaos of thought, confused at first,
As I gaze on the thin smoke curling:
But clearly, anon, float visions that erst
Were brightest and best, or darkest and worst,
As the pages of life are unfurling.

As the fragrant circles rise in the air,
Like the vanishing mists of the morning,
There come to me memories pleasing and fair,
And I give to the winds those laden with care,
At twilight their company scorning.

Could we skyward waft in those rings of smoke
All the ills that here beset us,
Or as easily lift each galling yoke,
How often thy aid we would invoke
For the errors that chafe and fret us!

Still, it wraps the mind like an easy cloak
With its mild, narcotic soothing,
And it holds it thus till the spell is broke—
For many a vision ends in smoke—
The roughness of misery smoothing.!

So we draw in our pipe, and our fancy too,
For the solace of pleasures denied us;
Our castles are always more gorgeous than true,
They are whiffs of pleasure as vapid as dew,
Yet balm for the wounds that have tried us.

But the pipe of peace, as the night grows old,
Its burning of incense ceases:
'Twixt musing and dozing its ashes are cold,
And the nerveless mouth relaxes its hold,
And the pipe and dream go to pieces.

THE WORLD OF AIR.

If the census could be taken of all the creatures that live in the aerial world, and of those which inhabit the depths of the sea, we should find that the population of the ocean far exceeded that of the dry land. If we could go still further, we might find that there is a larger number of living beings having their abode under the soil than exist on the surface. Constituted as we are, a residence on the outer side of the globe might seem to be more desirable than the dark chambers where millions upon millions of intelligent ants carry on their domestic vocations, and life in the deep caverns of the sea is associated in our mind with all that is dull and dreary. So the birds, who scale the mountain summit, if they were able to reason about the matter, might come to the conclusion that we wingless beings who are for the most part tied down to the surface of the earth must have a very forlorn time.

But no creature, wherever he abides, can live without air. It is a wonderful indication of an all-wise and designing Providence that the elements of the air contained in water could be precisely adapted to the necessities of the finny tribe, and also that the density of the atmosphere on the surface of the earth should be so exactly conformed to our physical condition.

A little more than a hundred years ago the nature of the air was not at all understood. Nobody knew what it was made of, and it was generally suppose to be a simple, uncompounded substance. If a man had been told that he supported on his body about sixteen tons of air, he would have been much surprised, and probably would have doubted the fact. So long as everything is quiet we do not feel the pressure, simply because the air inside of the body counteracts the pressure from without, there being, in fact, no pressure at all; but let these sixteen tons begins to move briskly, and we soon find out what the air is capable of doing.

Those of our readers who live in the region of cyclones could tell us some marvellous stories of the power of the air. How far above us the atmosphere extends it is impossible to tell.

The highest point ever reached by balloon is from six to seven miles above the surface of the earth. The absolute silence of these upper regions is said to be unlike any stillness that we ever know in those lower quarters, for there is always something to break the silence in the world around us, even in the stillest night.

Aeronauts say that they can hear what is said a thousand feet below, while they cannot make themselver heard by those beneath beyond a distance of three hundred and thirty feet. They also say that the reflection of their own voices from a smooth surface of water is very distinct and marked.

In the Arctic regions men can talk intelligibly at a distance of more than a mile, while, on the top of a high mountain, all sounds are faint and feeble. Light is independent of the air or it never could reach us from the heavenly bodies; but there can be no sound without air, and the damper the air the more favorable for the transmission of sound.

In very elevated regions one can put his finger into boiling water without suffering any special inconvenience, because the pressure of the atmosphere is so slight that the water evaporates faster than it can be heated.

The monks of St. Bernard, who live 8,000 feet above the level of the sea, would find it very difficult to get up a respectably well-boiled dinner. Darwin tells of the disappointment felt when they found it impossible on the Andes to boil a potato; and on the high table-lands of Peru, ten to fourteen thousand feet high, they never undertake to boil an egg or a piece of meat.

Why is the sky blue? The atmosphere itself has no color, but in the higher regions it is filled with minute particles of water, which act as reflectors. It is this which causes the diffusion of light. If the air were perfectly dry, we should see the sun as a bright ball, surrounded by darkness. The gorgeous colors of sunrise and sunset are attributable to the same cause. There would be no such thing as aerial perspective, no way of determining the relations of objects, but for the moisture or haziness in the atmosphere. This aqueous vapor also serves as a blanket, to keep the earth warm.

It is strange to think that the soft, bland air we breathe should contain in itself the elements of the most destructive poisons and the most dangerous explosives to be found in nature.

In its purity it is the sustainer of life and the great invigorator of health, but it may become the vehicle of most deadly disease. To-day it fans us with its sweet breath, lulling the soul and body to soft repose; to-morrow it rages with the wrath of a thousand demons, and marks its track with swift destruction. Intangible to the touch in its repose, there is no structure that man can build which is able to resist its might. Everything that lives is nourished by it, and sooner or later it destroys everything that it has caused to live.

Grains of Gold.

Immodest words admit of no defense.

Economy is of itself a great revenue.

Think of the ills from which you are exempt.

What makes life dreary is the want of motive.

On life's highway slander takes toll from reputations.

High trees feel the wind; lofty station is obnoxious to danger.

Deceit is the oleomargarine that is mixed with the butter of truth.

There is always somebody to believe in any one who is uppermost.

Each departed friend is a magnet that attracts us to the next world.

Never think you can make yourself great by making another less.

There can be no peace in human life without the contempt of all evil.

When we think of the Future, we do not often think of the Future of Futures.

I hardly know so true a mark of little mind as the servile imitation of others.

It is no shame for a man to learn what he knows not, whatever age he may be.

If we are God's children we need not fear the development of His providence.

If we do not flatter ourselves, the flattery of others will not be able to injure us.

It is the fate of mankind, too often, to seem insensible of what they may enjoy at the easiest rate.

The three things most difficult are, to keep a secret, to forget an injury, and to make good use of leisure.

"Loving kindness," says the Talmud, "is greater than laws; and the charities of life are more than all ceremonies."

Without a belief in personal immortality religion is surely like an arch resting on one pillar—like a bridge ending in an abyss.

It is not wisdom, but ignorance, that teaches men presumption. Genius may be sometimes arrogant, but nothing is so diffident as knowledge.

It is impossible to make people understand their ignorance, for it requires knowledge to perceive it; and therefore he that can perceive it hath it not.

Ill-humor is nothing more than an inward feeling of our own want of merit, a dissatisfaction with ourselves which is always united with an envy that foolish vanity excites.

Femininities.

The more you say the less people remember.

Outside pockets are reappearing in the world of fashion.

The coasting season in Albany averaged one broken limb per night.

A fashionable woman's cheek makes a fine billboard for cosmetic advertisements.

General Phil Sheridan gallantly carries his wife's handbag when he goes shopping with her.

Individual conscience is often the duty of interest, and often but a more honorable name for self-will.

"Yes," said Mrs. Seldomhit, "I keep off the evil spirits now by wearing an omelet around my neck."

The Princess Royal of Lisbon and the Crown Princess of Denmark have both given birth to sons recently.

No member of the Japanese aristocracy thinks his family an old one unless he can trace a clear descent for six or seven hundred years.

Lady Randolph Churchill rushed to a photographer's after Queen Victoria's last "Drawing-room" and was photographed in her court attire.

The President's wife is said to be averse to listening to or encouraging gossip. She would make a brilliant failure as the president of a female sewing circle.

"Mamma," exclaimed little Mabel Swilligen, "you said they had measles at McCorkle's! Well, I was there, and I looked all around and didn't see a single measle."

Collecting silver spoons in Europe is the latest craze among American ladies. They buy a different shaped spoon in each chief city, and have the name of the place engraved on the bowl.

We find the following advertisement in a German contemporary: "Will sell or rent my windmill at Terschnow. A respectable man can get the mill by marrying my daughter.—Frau Hoffman."

Visitor: "What name are you going to give the little fellow?" Mrs. Simples: "His name is going to be William. I want him to be a great poet like Shakespeare. His name was William, you know."

French women are dressing their hair in what they call the Chinese fashion, combed perfectly smooth up to the top of the head, then twisted into a coil on one side, with a large comb specially made on the other.

Brides are having better times now than they used to, anyway. The tell-tale modest brown and gray gowns, as patent advertisements of a state of bridy-ness as ever were invented, are fast being done away with.

In an old valise belonging to O. O. Putney, a miner, who was killed by an avalanche at Bay Horse, Idaho, were found some faded love letters, a few bones and a note saying: "I wish these bones buried with me."

Mrs. Marion Todd is a successful lawyer in Albion, Mich. Her first case was for a railroad conductor against a rich corporation, and she won it. She is now prosecuting a $25,000 damage suit against the Central Pacific Railroad.

In kitchen-French "braise" means meat cooked in a closely-covered stew pan, so that it retains it own flavor and those of the vegetables and flavorings put with it; "brioche," a very rich cake made with yeast, and "cannelon," stuffed rolled-up meat.

A scientific journal states that "all modern high explosives are now almost universally exploded by the agency of electricity." A Jersey City paper says coal oil is still exploded by the agency of the cookstove and the hired girl, which is an important exception.

After the accident. She: "Were you hurt much, Mr. De Dooder?" Mr. De D.: "Aw, Miss Calwa, I was, aw, knocked senseless, don't you know." She: "Oh, I'm so glad you escaped. They told me you had been injured." Mr. De D. wonders what she means.

To clean kid gloves rub them with very slightly dampened crumbs of bread. Or scrape French chalk upon them while on the hands and wash them in a basin containing diluted spirits of ammonia. Some gloves can be cleansed with milk, or rice pulp, or turpentine.

A lady living in Italy writes that one Count of her acquaintance is a carpenter and another a bricklayer; while she has seen the granddaughter of a Countess working in the fields. Romantic girls who think that Italian counts are superior to the untitled gentry will thus be undeceived.

Some of the extreme leaders of fashion give parties at which the guests are expected to appear in the costumes of a play selected by the hostess and notified on the card of invitation. Others choose a popular book, and no one is admitted who has not "fixed up" in accordance with the text. Sir Walter Scott is said to be the chief favorite.

"We shall know each other there," is a line in a hymn which is a favorite with many good people. Some people are more anxious about heavenly recognition than about knowing each other here. There is many a weary, discouraged pilgrim not far from each one of us who would be greatly cheered if we would cultivate his or her acquaintance here.

"It's a great pity women don't know more about financial legislation," remarked a Wall street man to his partner the other morning. "Why, what's the matter? Spring bonnets demanding an appropriation?" "Oh, no, not yet; but my wife was asking me at breakfast what the trade dollar bill was. She said all the dollar bills she knew anything about were paper and legal tender."

At the close of a prayer meeting in one of Troy's churches recently a lady who had reached the vestibule on her way out missed one of her rubber overshoes. She went back and searched for it. Several friends assisted. The overshoe could not be found. As the search was about to be abandoned the lady made the discovery that she had put both rubbers on one foot, one over the other.

Masculinities.

A man's folly ought to be his greatest secret.

Giving too much attention to soft hands indicates a soft head.

Colonel Ingersoll says he will deliver no more anti-religious lectures.

Kalamazoo is to have a factory to make bachelor buttons that screw on.

Men's years and their faults are always more than they are willing to own.

Reformers look small in the eyes of the world because they are so far in advance.

The tailor may not make the man, but he has considerable influence in shaping him.

A miser grows rich by seeming poor; an extravagant man grows poor by seeming rich.

Many people mistake stubbornness for bravery, meanness for economy, and vileness for wit.

The efforts of a strong man, aided by the counsels of a sensible woman, rarely or never fail to succeed.

Man must work. He may work grudgingly or gratefully. He may work as a man or as a machine.

Many a man is always ready to pay his respects to you who will never pay much of anything else.

The girls will be pleased with a uniform marriage law if the uniform is pretty and there is a man in it.

Farmer Bates, of Hand county, D. T., has started an order to be known as the Knights of Agriculture.

It is impossible that an ill-natured man can have a public spirit; for how should he love ten thousand men who never loved one?

The late Lord Deas, of the Scottish bench, had so great a horror of tobacco that he never failed to hang a smoking man if he could.

The general conclusion to be drawn from hatters' figures is favorable to the opinion that large heads and mental capacity go together.

If a man has a right to be proud of anything, it is of a good action, done as it ought to be, without any base interest lurking at the bottom of it.

Ignorance, when voluntary, is criminal, and a man may be properly charged with that evil which he neglected or refused to learn how to prevent.

A law suit that lately attracted a great deal of attention at Merced, Cal., came to a sudden conclusion by the marriage of the plaintiff and defendant.

It is very singular how death seems to give people a truer idea of a man's character, whether for good or evil, than they ever possessed while he lived among them.

"If you will put that three ton of coal in my cellar and saw some wood and clean up my yard, I will give you a good dinner." Tramp: "No, thanks; we actors never eat."

The little brother who persists in hanging about the drawing-room when his big sister is entertaining her young man is committing a heinous offense. It is a defiance of the court.

One of the qualifications mentioned in favor of a Georgia Congressman, who is mentioned for the Speakership, is that he could "decide a point of order and bow to a lady simultaneously."

No matter how bad and destructive a boy may be, it has been observed by the Texas Siftings, he rarely becomes so degraded or loses his self-respect sufficiently to throw mud on a circus poster.

Know his business. Young woman, timidly, to clerk: "I would like to look at some false hair, please." Clerk, experienced: "Yes, ma'am. What color does your friend want?" Sale quickly effected.

"That fellow calls himself a soldier, and yet he never smelt powder," said Jones to Smith. "Never smelt powder, eh?" "No, sir." "I think you are wrong. I saw him kissing a society girl the other night."

The medical student of Maine must dissect before he can become an M. D., but the law provides that no bodies shall be dissected except those of executed criminals, and another law abolishes capital punishment.

An injury unanswered in course grows weary of itself and dies in a voluntary remorse. In bad dispositions, capable of no restraint but fear, it has a different effect; the silent digestion of one wrong provokes a second.

A man living at a hotel is like a grape-vine in a flower pot—movable, carried around from place to place, docked at the root and short at the top. Nowhere can a man get real root-room and spread out his branches till they touch the morning and the evening, but in his own house.

It seems that a lawyer is something of a carpenter. He can file a bill, split a hair, chop logic, dovetail an argument, make an entry, get up a case, frame an indictment, empanel a jury, put them in a box, nail a witness, hammer a judge, bore a court, chisel a client, make lots of dust, and other like things.

Preaching what he did not practice. "Papa," said fond mamma, "do you know that Robbie told me a deliberate story to-day?" "What's that?" said papa, looking sternly at Robbie; "a story? Do you know what becomes of little boys who tell stories?" Robbie didn't know. "The lions and tigers eat 'em up. You mustn't tell stories, Robbie, it's wicked."

This is the way in which the editor of one Western paper pulverizes the editor of another: "We intend to keep on hurling hot shot at him from our editorial locker until the thin mantle of quasi-respectability is torn from his shoulder, revealing him as he really is—reeking with corruption, morally leprous, sin-stained, debased, despised, abhorrent, abominated, detested, scoffed at, reviled, a liar and a snake!"

Recent Book Issues.

"The Latest Studies on Indian Reservations," by J. B. Harrison, is full of value and interest to all who take any side on the question of the relations of the Indians to our government. The book is remarkable for a strong presentment of facts, clear views and many most sensible suggestions. Published by the Indian Rights Association, No. 1316 Filbert street, this city.

FRESH PERIODICALS.

Our Little Ones and the Nursery is a splendid publication for younger readers, being filled with very pleasant stories and fine pictures. Published at No. 36 Bromfield street, Boston, Mass.

Among *The Sanitarian's* contents for the present month are the following excellent articles: "The Real and the Ideal in Hygiene," "Syphilis from a Sanitary Standpoint," "Diagnostic Responsibility," "Results of Mistaken Diagnosis," "A Fever Epidemic from Drinking Sewage," "The Sanitary Condition of the City of Mexico," "The Plumbers' Plea for Representation on Boards of Health," "Scientific Standard for the Safety of Illuminating Oils," etc. Published at No. 113 Fulton street, New York City.

The April *Eclectic* is well freighted with interesting articles. A highly seasonable paper is that by Prince Kropotkin, who discusses "The Scientific Basis of Anarchy." A. G. Bradley is the author of a delightful paper entitled "The Doctor: An Old Virginia Fox Hunter." "Our Noble Selves" is a vigorous assertion of the superiority of the present age. A highly suggestive contribution is found in Col. Malleson's "Rivalry of England and Russia." Mme. Adam's personal sketch of Paul Bert is very entertaining, and even more so will be found Mr. G. W. Smalley's "Notes on New York." H. Rider Haggard has a racy article on fiction, and the paper on Russian life by Stepniak, called "The Mir and the Police," ought to command the closest attention. Other notable papers are "A Nautical Lament," and "Twenty-four Hours in a Newspaper Office." There are several poems, sketches, and other minor articles well worth the reading. Published by E. R. Pelton, No. 25 Bond street, New York City.

In the *Forum* for April Professor Richard A. Proctor discusses "The Reality of the Sea Serpent," and agrees with Dr. Andrew Wilson, of Edinburgh, that, laying aside all doubtful cases, there remains a body of evidence only to be explained on the hypothesis that certain gigantic marine animals at present unfamiliar or unknown to science do certainly exist. In "Practical Uses for the Balloon," Mr. Samuel A. King, the well-known aeronaut, thinks that the value of the balloon as an instrument for meteorological observation is unquestionably very great. Among other thoughtful articles touching on social and economic questions are: "Manual Training in Public Schools," by Professor T. Davidson; "Socialism and Unsocialism," by Rev. Washington Gladden; "Do We Need Prohibition?" answered in the negative by Rev. John Snyder, and "Remedies for Municipal Misgovernment," by Amos K. Fiske. Published No. 97 Fifth avenue, New York.

The April *Wide Awake* opens with a very beautiful Easter Morning frontispiece of lilies and chanting children by W. L. Taylor, who also illustrates the quaint article by Mrs. H. G. Rowe, entitled "A Yankee Schoolmistress." A Canadian poet, Miss Agnes Maclar, has an Easter poem, "Easter Lilies," and Mrs. Susan Archer Weiss, one of the most thorough of folk-lore delvers, an article upon old Easter observances, and Dora Read Goodale a funny little plaint entitled "Easter Wares," in which she bewails the decay of the race of hens who used to lay gay and beautiful eggs at Easter time. But while due attention is given to the Easter season, this does not interfere with the usual variety of the best of good things for the entertainment of young people. There are several bright stories, sketches of adventure, biography and history, etc., and the illustrations are profuse and beautiful. D. Lothrop & Co., Boston.

The Century Magazine for April is a splendid number. Nicolay and Hay's Life of Lincoln has reached that important and exciting period when the Douglas debates began. Mrs. Van Rensselaer contributes one of the most readable of her brilliant descriptive papers, the subject being "Canterbury Cathedral," with beautiful illustrations. Everybody will read with delight Uncle Remus' southern war story, "Little Compton." Edward Eggleston contributes a remarkably interesting illustrated paper about "Colonial Churches." "The Veda," by Prof. W. D. Whitney, is scholastic, but written in a style sure to make it of popular interest. Mark Twain is eminently characteristic in his paper on "English as She is Taught." Gen. D. H. Hill furnishes the war paper, writing in a graphic manner of "Chickamauga;" and another paper, by Gen. J. S. Fullerton, tells about "The Reserve at Chickamauga." There are several other articles, to which we have before referred, notably among them a symposium on "International Music Copyright," by Dudley Buck, Theodore Thomas and others. The editorial and others department are fresh and able and fully abreast of the times. The Century Co., New York.

SMALL diamond earrings are crowding out the hazelnut size. The Princess of Wales began the pushing.

Her Resolution.

BY PERCY VERE.

"TO THINK that you will be eighteen in another two months, and coming out! How funny it seems!"

The speaker was a tall, plain girl, and she spoke to her sister as they walked along the road together. Her sister was also tall, but this was the only point of resemblance between them.

The elder, as aforesaid, was plain; the younger was a type of that vigorous and healthful beauty nowhere to be found in such perfection as in England.

She was fair, with quantities of shining hair tightly plaited into thick coils, from which it seemed ever trying to escape. Her eyes were of that changeable color variously called hazel, or green or gray, according to the fancy of the describer; to my mind the most expressive and the most fascinating in the world. They lighted up mischievously as her sister spoke.

"Not so fast, my good girl," she exclaimed in a clear, ringing voice. "I may be eighteen in two months' time, but I shall certainly not be out."

The elder looked at her with an amused smile. She was a somewhat silent girl; but, perhaps, like the famous parrot, she thought all the more because she did not speak. She contented herself with saying—

"Papa has made up his mind; so you will."

"Oh," said the other, with a fine amount of scorn, which seemed to indicate that the word "Papa" had not many terrors for her; "and pray if I refuse to go to the dressmaker's, what is he to do? He can't go and be measured for a ball dress instead of me, can he?"

Marion Ramsay smiled—a provoking smile, I suppose, for Chrystabel went on with more vivacity than ever—

"Why should I come out? I hate dancing; I can't dance. Nobody would dance with me."

Marion only smiled inwardly at this.

"If it were riding, now, it would be quite a different thing; but how sensible people can get any enjoyment from jigging round one another I cannot conceive. They might just as well skip or whip tops. If they spent the money that is wasted on dances in keeping horses, it would be a most excellent thing. That's the sort of reform I should propose if I went into Parliament. Not that it would affect me one way or the other, for I shall never marry a man who does not keep heaps of horses."

"But supposing you fell in love with some one who didn't?" Marion ventured to urge.

"But I shouldn't," with the invincible superiority of youth.

Two months passed by, and in due course of time Chrystabel Ramsay came out. It concerns us not to describe her ball dress, or even her first ball, though her impressions of it may be worth recording.

The recipient of them was Marion, to whose room she came to brush her hair and talk it over. She was as wide awake and fresh as possible; her eyes were shining with excitement, and her beautiful hair was loose and spread over her shoulders. It was extremely long and thick, falling in shining cataracts far below her waist.

She might have been the daughter of an ancient Viking, so fair and tall was she, so nobly and amply proportioned, so overflowing with life and vigor.

"Well, my princess, how did you enjoy it?" asked her sister fondly.

"Oh, pretty well," with would-be carelessness. A pause. Then, suddenly, "I say, Marion, I liked that Mr. Dalkeith you introduced me to. He—he says he is coming to call. He danced with me five times."

One great point about Marion, and probably the reason why so many people confided in her, was that she never seemed to notice anything.

She saw now the little flush on her sister's cheek and the shyness in her eyes, but she did not turn away her own, or make any elaborate pretence of not having seen anything.

She merely said, quietly—

"He does dance well, doesn't he? I thought him the best dancer in the room to-night."

"Yes," said Chrystabel, eagerly; "he is so nice and tall, and he does swing one round so easily; it was jolly."

Here she stopped and looked doubtfully at Marion. Did the latter remember anything about "skipping or whipping tops?" If so, her face did not betray her; and Chrystabel, reassured, resumed her impulsive chatter, which was chiefly about Mr. Dalkeith.

Mr. Dalkeith called about a week after the ball, and found Chrystabel Ramsay alone in the drawing-room. If he congratulated himself on the circumstance, he was soon to find out his mistake. That young lady was in a very impatient humor. She had been promised a ride at three o'clock, and it was now a quarter past, and the horses had not arrived. After fidgeting about for five or six minutes, and paying the very slightest attention to her visitor's talk, she exclaimed, impulsively—

"Oh, Mr. Dalkeith, do you think there's anything in the world so provoking as to be kept waiting when one is going for a ride?"

Mr. Dalkeith smiled. "I don't ride," he said, "so I can't say."

"Don't ride! Why not?"

"To begin with, I can't afford to keep a horse; to go on with, I never can manage to keep on."

"Oh!" with undisguised contempt in her voice. "I don't think anything of a man who can't ride."

Mr. Dalkeith reddened slightly. "Surely, Miss Ramsay, there are other accomplishments besides riding well?"

"Nothing so well worth doing," promptly. "It's bad enough for a girl not to be able to; but for a man—well, for my own choice, I never would speak to a man who couldn't ride as well as he could walk."

At that moment Marion entered. "The horses are ready, Chrys," she said.

Chrystabel immediately rushed frantically downstairs, without paying any more attention to Mr. Dalkeith.

"You must excuse my sister," said Marion, laughing. "Her whole thoughts are given up to horses."

"She was just telling me that she did not care even to speak to a man who could not ride," said Mr. Dalkeith, quietly.

Marion smiled. "That is just one of her speeches," she said, much amused. "She always declares she will not marry a man who does not own heaps of horses."

After this they left off talking about Chrystabel, but Mr. Dalkeith was very gloomy and depressed, and Marion was glad when he rose to go.

Two days afterwards there was another dance. No persuasion was required this time to induce Chrystabel to go.

She was quite eager about it. Mr. Dalkeith was there. Chrystabel bowed and smiled directly she saw him, and he returned her bow gravely, but did not attempt to come near her.

She kept one or two dances at the end, in hopes that he might ask her for one presently, but she might have saved herself the trouble; for though he danced with Marion, he did not with her.

Chrystabel was very silent on the way home, and did not utter any expressions of delight when she came down to Marion's room as usual.

She toasted her feet at the fire for some time, and then said suddenly, "Marion, let me look at your programme."

She looked at it for a moment in silence; then said, "You danced three times with Mr. Dalkeith. Marion, he never asked me for a dance. Do you think it is because I dance too badly?"

There was would-be indifference in the tone, but the half-averted head and quivering lip told a different tale.

Marion hesitated. "Chrys, tell me, did you know that he could not ride a bit?"

"Yes; he told me so the other day when he called."

"Was that when you told him that you did not care even to speak to a man who could not ride?"

Chrys nodded; her eyes on the fire.

"Well, Chrysie, I don't think that a man with any self-respect would come near you after that. It was as good as telling him to keep away."

"It does sound rude now," Chrystabel admitted; "but I was in such a state of worry because those horses hadn't come."

"Poor child!" said her sister, smiling. "Tell him so the next time you see him."

"Do you think he would be nice?" asked Chrystabel, brightening.

"I'm sure he would," said Marion, promptly. "Come; it's time you went to bed."

Chrystabel did not see Mr. Dalkeith again for more than three weeks. The occasion of their meeting was long remembered by both. Chrystabel had gone out driving by herself, she being very fond of doing so.

Mr. Dalkeith was walking along the principal street of the little town when his attention was attracted by the excited talk of some people just behind him.

At the same time his ear caught the sound of the rapid clatter of horses' hoofs. The street was nearly a mile long, and looking up it, he saw that which made his heart stand still.

Rapidly approaching was the Ramsays' dogcart. The horse had taken fright at something, and was tearing along at a terrific pace.

Standing up in it was Chrystabel, pale, but perfectly composed, and evidently exerting all her superb strength to check the runaway.

And well she might, for the street ended in a steep hill, where the cart must inevitably be upset at the pace the horse was then going.

Mr. Dalkeith knew this, and inwardly cursed the cowards who got out of the way without attempting to stop the horse.

The spot where he himself was standing was close to the hill, and here he stood and waited. Chrystabel Ramsay had just given herself up for lost, when somebody sprang into the road in front of the horse.

There was a moment's terrible suspense; and then the deed which had seemed impossible was done, and the frightened animal was brought to a standstill.

Chrystabel and Mr. Dalkeith looked at each other in silence for a minute—silence in which each seemed to read the other's soul.

They were both pale; he the more so of the two. Then, "You are not hurt?" he said, most anxiously.

"No," smiling faintly. "And you?"

"Oh, I'm all right. But won't you get down?"

"Oh, no. I shall drive home again now."

"I consider it my duty to come and look after you," said Mr. Dalkeith, gravely. And he clambered up and took a seat beside her.

Chrystabel spoke a few encouraging words to the horse, and he started off at a slow trot. Then she turned and looked at Mr. Dalkeith, and he saw that her beautiful eyes were full of tears.

"I ought to thank you," she said tremulously; "but I cannot. You saved my life. I know that, and at the risk of your own."

Mr. Dalkeith moved—it is not too much to say that he wriggled—uncomfortably in his seat.

"You are brave," he said, feebly, trying to turn the matter off. "I never saw anyone so brave."

"I think I might say that of you," went on Chrystabel, not to be turned from her purpose. "And—and I was so rude to you the other day, Mr. Dalkeith. I have been meaning to tell you ever since I was sorry, but I have never seen you to speak to. I do beg your pardon—I do indeed."

"You beg my pardon?" gasped poor Mr. Dalkeith, becoming a vivid crimson. "Miss Ramsay, that was not necessary. But—but I am glad that you were not in earnest; I was afraid to speak to you again."

"If I was in earnest," said Chrystabel, "you have effectually shown me my mistake to-day, Mr. Dalkeith. I shall never again despise any one who does not ride."

To their common regret they had now reached Chrystabel's home, and Mr. Dalkeith departed, but not for long. He came the next day to inquire after Chrystabel, who had apparently given them a glowing account of his conduct, for he was brought in and shaken hands with and thanked by everybody.

Mr. Ramsay pressed him to stay and dine, but he did not require much pressing. The merry family party was a pleasant change from his own bachelor room, and the lively chatter a decided improvement on the stale jokes and stories which always went the round of the club-table.

He had not met Mrs. Ramsay before, and thought her delightful. She was very quiet in manner, like Marion, but must have been a most beautiful girl, and was a very handsome woman still.

Her children inherited her good looks, and they made a pleasing picture round the dinner-table.

But was all this any reason why the foolish young man should imagine himself in an earthly paradise, or why he should say to himself that he had never spent such an evening before in his life? It is true that he feasted his eyes on Chrystabel, who made a picture fair enough for the most critical eye to admire, and that he laughed consumedly at all her small witticisms. She had never been so much appreciated before, and that must have been the reason why she was in such high spirits.

Mr. Dalkeith could hardly tear himself away, and did not go without extracting a promise from Chrystabel of three dances at a coming entertainment.

This was to be in three weeks' time, and meanwhile Mr. Dalkeith improved his opportunities.

He met her at the band; he met her at theatricals; he asked them all to tea in his rooms; and, crowning delight, he skated with her on the ice after a heavy frost. And then came the wished for ball.

Mr. Dalkeith was not content with three dances by this time; at least, he asked for the promised three, but he suggested in a low voice that she should double them.

He had taken great pains with his appearance this evening, and had even waxed his moustache. Chrystabel noticed it all at once.

"Oh," she said, with a little look of disgust, "what have you been doing to yourself? You have quite spoilt yourself."

Mr. Dalkeith said nothing at the time; but when the next dance came round he appeared with his moustache in its usual condition.

"Oh," said Chrystabel, "I am so glad you are yourself again; but how ever did you manage it?"

"There was plenty of time between this dance and our last," he replied; "so, as you didn't like it, I just ran round to my room and altered it."

"Did you take all that trouble just because of me?" exclaimed Chrystabel. "How nice of you."

"I would do a great deal more than that because of you," he replied, reddening slightly. "I—I have been learning to ride."

"I am so glad," Chrystabel exclaimed. "I would like you to do everything well!"

"Would you? Would you, my darling?" passionately, hotly. "May I love you as well as I know I can? Will you not let me?"

Where were Chrystabel's resolutions now?

Gone, vanished, charmed away by the voice and look of the man whom she loved.

Needless to say she did not retail them to Mr. Dalkeith. What she said matters little. The substance of it was made known to Mr. Ramsay the next day by her lover.

And to the surprise of the family, Chrystabel—their beautiful Chrystabel, for whom a prince would not have been good enough—was married to a penniless man.

Marion sometimes recalled her sister's old dreams of happiness—so different from the reality, which, nevertheless was a reality. She reminded her of them one day. Chrystabel smiled and blushed—a charming blush, which spoke volumes.

"I was in love with horses then," she said; "but now I am in love with my husband."

"I DON'T much like my aunt, Lady A.," remarked Miss P. to her confidential friend. "Don't you, dear? How is that?" "Oh, she says such odious things!" "Indeed!" "Yes. Why, what do you think I overheard her saying to mamma only yesterday in her self-sufficient way? 'Rose, my love, why don't you get those girls of yours married? They're an ugly lot, and won't improve by keeping.'"

Two young ladies run a shooting-gallery at San Bernardino, California.

Humorous.

A PUZZLED VOCALIST.

How can a person learn to sing?
That's what I want to ask.
I felt, some year or two ago,
All ardor for my task.

The teacher whom I met with first
My brain with terms would cram—
"Don't use the thyroid muscle so;
Sing from the diaphragm."

He used to open wide my jaws
And in my windpipe grope
With little mirrors set on wires,
Called a laryngoscope.

My second teacher said my voice
Had been quite falsely tried,
That "registers" were simply bosh,
And must be set aside.

A third one told me that my voice
Was built for second bass,
And, if I got it "focussed" right,
It would improve apace.

Another told me that my breath
Must near the armpit's play;
The next one said that force of tone
Within the membranes lay.

With vocal cords and diaphragm
And crico-thyroid bone
I was becoming mystified
And could not give a tone.

At last I met a teacher gruff,
Who made my heart rejoice.
He heard me through quite patiently,
Then said, "You have no voice."

—U. N. Nonz.

Light labor—Cleaning lamps.

A striking expression—"Hit him again."

Always prepared for death—The undertaker.

Can a blind man be held responsible for a bill which he has accepted payable at sight?

"Keep faith with your children." Certainly. If you promise them a licking give it to 'em.

The following notice is to be seen at the entrance of a French cemetery. "Here are interred the dead living in this parish."

Lillie Cushman prints a poem entitled, "Unknown is Best." But how does Lillie know what is best, if it is unknown?

Don't complain because you haven't got a rag to your back. Many a man goes about clothed in tatters, and is not happy.

Away out in Kansas they say there is a traveling dramatic company playing a local sketch entitled, "Ten Nights in a Drug Store."

"Pa, why is a pretty girl called a belle?" asked Clara. "Oh, I suppose that it is because of her tongue," unfeelingly replied the old man.

"Well, but if you can't bear her, whatever made you propose?" "Well, we had danced three dances, and I couldn't think of anything else to say."

If you want to meet all your friends, just undertake to run along the street to catch a train. Every man you ever saw will be on hand to pass the time of day.

"Why are you so precise in your statement? Are you afraid of telling an untruth?" asked a lawyer of a witness in a police court. "No, sir!" was the prompt reply.

It is said that a woman has little or no sense of humor, and it must be true; otherwise she could never get past the love, honor and obey part of the marriage ceremony without laughing.

A bride in Winsted, Conn., fainted when the clergyman asked her to say yes; but she was not so far gone that she couldn't remark vigorously, between gasps, "Keep him till I come around."

Twenty young ladies of Lincoln, Ill., sat together two hours without speaking a word, and thereby won $100 for some missionary cause. But you couldn't hire them to do it again for $500 apiece.

A breach of promise camera is a late invention. It goes by clock-work, and when concealed in a parlor ornament perfectly reproduces every act of the young man who is calling on the daughter of the house.

"Isn't that the gentleman who paid our fare and was so polite the other night?" she asked in a whisper. "Yes." "And why does he treat us so coolly to-night?" "Hush! He has his reasons. That's his wife with him."

A teacher in one of the grammar-schools was giving her class a lesson in the art of putting words into sentences. The words selected, with their definitions, were "aqueduct—a conductor," and "effervesce—to work." One of the sentences handed in read, "My father is an aqueduct, and has to effervesce very hard."

Complimentary.

HUMPHREY'S MANUAL, Enlarged and Revised Edition, 144 pages, richly bound in Cloth and Gold, Sent FREE upon application to the Company.

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TWO OLD NATIONS.

The Chinese wear white during the periods of mourning, never black. The old men playfully fly kites, while the boys look on, as in Japan.

They whiten their shoes with chalk instead of blacking them, and mount their horses from the off side. The men in China wear the petticoats, while the women invariably wear pantaloons.

Men keep the dressmaking and millinery stores, and every man carries a fan, either in his hand or tucked in the collar of his dress behind the neck. Women smoke on all occasions.

When a man has suffered an injury at the hands of another and desires revenge, instead of killing his offender he kills himself, believing that the man whom he hates will be held accountable for his death, and will be fearfully tormented by demons in this world and in the next.

If a Chinaman wishes to especially honor anyone, he assigns him to a standing or sitting position on his left hand. Instead of a Japanese woman compressing her feet as her Chinese sister does, she has a custom far more disgusting.

They naturally have fine teeth, but when a woman marries she is compelled by custom to dye her teeth black, which process is repeated every few years. The effect is hideous in the extreme.

The most important article of a native woman's dress is the obi, or sash. This is usually of a costly material, and is tied behind in a huge bow with the strictest care.

When a Japanese woman becomes a widow and signifies her determination never to marry again, she ties the obi in front. They seem to smoke all the time.

The tiny Japanese pipe contains but two or three whiffs, and as the tobacco is rolled up tightly in the fingers before it is inserted the ash when shaken out is a small fireball, from which a second pipe is lighted. At a Japanese feast the same cup is passed from hand to hand, each person rinsing it in a bowl of water after using and before offering it to another.

The lowest classes of Japanese are buried in a squatting position, in a sort of barrel. It is a mistake to suppose that the burying of the dead is universal in Japan.

The rich and noble are buried in square coffins, the body being partially preserved from decay by filling the nose, ears, and mouth with vermillion. After death the person receives a new name.

This name is "Okwuna" or the accompany name. It is customary on occasions of the first visit to a house to carry a present to the owner, who gives something of equal value on returning the visit.

LITTLE NELL (to visitor): "Oh, I have such good news. Mamma and papa and I are all going to another town to live." Visitor: "Indeed! You amaze me. What town is it?" Little Nell: "It has such a funny name. It is called Harry, and it's an awful old town." Visitor: "Oh, you must have heard the name wrong." Little Nell: "Oh, no, I didn't. It was at the breakfast-table. Papa told mamma to go to Old Harry, and mamma told papa to go there himself, and then I asked them to take me, and they did't say anything; but I know they will."

Moses Parks, of Reynolds, Ga., died the other day of measles, aged 82 years. He never was so ashamed of himself in his life.

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Price, 20c. per Cake. Box 3 Cakes 50c.

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INSTANTANEOUS GUIDE to the PIANO or ORGAN.

Anyone knowing a tune, either "in the head," as it is called, or able to hum, whistle or sing, can play it WITHOUT ANY PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE OF MUSIC OR THE INSTRUMENTS. In fact it may be the first time they have ever seen a piano or organ, yet if they know so much as to whistle or hum a tune—say "Way Down on the Swanee River," for instance—they can play it IMMEDIATELY, correctly and with good effect, on the piano or organ, with the assistance of this GUIDE. THE GUIDE shows how the tunes are to be played with both hands and in different keys. Thus the player has the full effect of the bass and treble clefs, together with the power of making correct and harmonious chords in accompaniments. It must be plainly understood that the Guide will not make an accomplished musician without study. It will do nothing of the kind. What it can do, do well and WITHOUT FAIL, is to enable anyone understanding the nature of a tune or air in music to play such tunes or airs, without ever having opened a music book, and without previously needing to know the difference between A or G, a half-note or a quarter-note, a sharp or a flat. The Guide is placed on the instrument, and the player, without reference to anything but what he is shown by it to do, can in a few moments play the piece accurately and without the least trouble. Although it does not and never can supplant regular books of study, it will be of incalculable assistance to the player by "ear" and all others who are their own instructors. By giving the student the power to play IMMEDIATELY twelve tunes of different character—this number of pieces being sent with each Guide—the ear grows accustomed to the sounds, and the fingers used to the position and touch of the keys. So, after a very little practice with the Guide, it will be easy to pick out, almost with the skill and rapidity of the trained player, any air or tune that may be heard or known.

The Guide, we repeat, will not learn how to read the common sheet music. But it will teach those who cannot spend years learning an instrument, how to learn a number of tunes without EITHER PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE OR STUDY. A child if it can say its A, B, C's and knows a tune—say "The Sweet Bye and Bye"—can play it, after a few attempts, quite well. There are many who would like to be able to do this, for their own and the amusement of others, and to such we commend The Guide as BOUND TO DO for them ALL WE SAY. Its cheapness and usefulness, moreover, would make it a very good present to give a person, whether young or old, at Christmas. Almost every home in the land has a piano, organ or melodeon, whereon seldom more than one of the family can play. With this Guide in the house everybody can make more or less good use of their instruments.

The Guide will be sent to any address, all postage paid, on receipt of FIFTY CENTS. (Postage stamps, 2's, taken.) For Ten Cents extra a music book, containing the words and music for 100 popular songs, will be sent with The Guide. Address

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726 SANSOM ST., PHILADELPHIA.

Latest Fashion Phases.

All those pretty surplice ideas in waists which slowly but surely have been creeping into the favor of well-dressed women; all those bretelle-like folds running down the back and front on both sides of a deep flat V; all those corsages cut with the goods on the bias, plaited flat, in one piece, over the shoulders, and dispensing with darts; all those draped, long-waisted, evasive, "swathed" effects (except that they are not bulky) which will culminate this coming season in a popularity that threatens to push the smooth-fitted waists almost into the shade—with a greater chance for thin women!

Add to these possibilities the numerous designs in full sleeves, also so well adapted for the concealing of an anatomy that had best not be too definitely revealed, and it is evident that all persons of the Sarah Bernhardt sisterhood, physically, have now before them the great opportunity of their lives.

Nevertheless, must it be assumed that a large majority of them will continue to nurse a preference for double-breasted waists of the severest tailor simplicity, while their more generously developed friends adopt the full sleeves and the Hellenic fichu plaits with an enthusiasm only commensurate with the material difficulties looming in the path of their wearing either with grace or fitness?

Past experience of the unfathomable ways of womankind in this and similar connections would make it possible to look forward to just this development.

But let stoutish women be advised. The surplice effects, however enticing they may seem, are not for them. A slenderly rounded figure can wear them charmingly, of course. But, let it be repeated, to the really, really thin—to the figure all suppleness and bones, or all bones and no suppleness—they mean beauty, they mean grace, they mean poetry, they mean salvation.

They mean the muffling away of too prominent shoulder-blades; they mean indefinite and softening curves, where erstwhile the severely uncompromising exactness of the "dart" served but to emphasize the fact that there was no need of it.

Now, then, it remains to be seen how many thin women will appreciate this advantage put within their grasp.

A distinct liking is beginning to be shown for the plain even-woven woolens not much seen latterly. The old-time merino is revived, and much cashmere and chuddah will be sold.

Chuddah is a trifle stiff and more resistant than many other wool goods, but a charming fabric all the same, and is now shown by the large dry-good houses in the delicate new tones of drab, gray, pigeon's egg, beige, with velvet stripes, or one band of velvet brocade to serve as a panel on the skirt, it will make visiting or walking gowns of a character quite distinct from anything latterly seen, and having a dainty and yet serious elegance of their own.

A suit of precisely this order is found very useful as a second and supplementary wool gown during the spring months, the everyday suit being of hair-lined cloth, check, cheviot, or other spring suiting; it does to wear to church and on the occasions where more dress is required than for a morning's shopping, and yet not too much.

Cashmere in all the new light shades promises to be much used, with vest and bands, and cuffs and collar of velvet somewhat darker, for costumes of just this character; for outdoor wear as well as for the house.

Other cashmere gowns, made more exclusively with a view to having them worn indoors will, it appears, be made the coming summer with wide tucks, headed by a row of feather stitching.

We have been shown a morning dress made of white wools plaited full all around, with a deep hem stitched in red silk at the top, and a sash of red surah hanging loosely at the side.

The half-fitting jacket is deep, in the matinee style, and made with a full-plaited vest of red surah, buttoned by small white shirt buttons, and widening revers and large square collar behind—all outlined an inch from the edge with the red feather-stitching.

This design of long jacket and vest and full, plain skirt was brought out last winter, and seems to be the best compromise between the real wrapper-like morning dress and a tight gown yet found. It can be varied in many ways, and while quite as comfortable and light and easy as the long matinees with plain skirts worn a few years ago, has a more dressed appearance and less suggests a "combing sack."

An important idea for a carriage gown gives a skirt of fawn silk, a large twill or cord, brocaded in a double leaf of satin, in a sort of dark "tilleul."

This brocaded skirt is laid in white, flat kilts along the left side and the back, and hangs plain. The front drapery is of flowery faille, and it is plaited in very heavily at the waist, extending thence to the bottom of the skirt in a deep, pointed apron, and brought back against the right side, where it is folded over with the zig-zag effect now grown familiar, showing a peep of green velvet wherever the reverse side of the plaits appear.

The bodice is of faille, with surplice folds crossing over the bust and giving a view of a shield-shaped piece of the brocade at the neck. On one side the folds are continued diagonally across to the edge of the bodice. The sleeves fall in a deep puff of faille from the shoulders to the elbow, and then simulate a very long, light cuff of brocade. The high collar was made of handsome green velvet.

Among the very prettiest of the summer cottons the new zephyrs take a prominent place. They are wonderfully crepy, transparent and soft, and come in plain and in stripes for combinations.

These are raised boucle inch stripes of red on a robin's egg blue ground, with the plain blue assorted; mixed boucle stripes on a very pale primrose, dark blue stripes on a pretty pale grayish blue ground, and so on.

It is to be noted that all the gradations of primrose, or buff, as it used to be called, are of frequent recurrence in all this season's cotton goods.

Some later satteens are shown with tiny red or blue checks on a primrose ground, which have an extremely bright and summery effect. Altogether, colors promise to be very light this spring.

A mention must be made of the new seersuckers, which likewise affect checks, sometimes of very small, sometimes of sufficiently large, dimensions, and run, in the first instance, in lines of old pink, pale blue and light buff or biege, and in the second in more decided blocks of darker blue and bright scarlet, alternating with checks of white.

These last, together with the rich striped seersuckers, showing alternating bars of scarlet and indigo on a bluish gray ground, will make showy and serviceable knock-about gowns for the seaside and the mountains.

Some of the thin, cool, zephyr ginghams have these flag-like stripes, too. A very pretty piece is of robin's egg blue, with inch stripes of old pink, pale blue and very pale chocolate, in alternation.

A special fabric has been brought out for tennis—a llama, but with quaint mingling of tones, such as cream, yellow, electric and red, sky-gray and cream; coral, blue and mousse, pink and green, forming checks. This stuff is peculiarly well adapted to the purpose, being light as to weight and effective in coloring.

The special novelty, however, is the introduction of chenille stripes in lines and brocaded stripes of chenille, part plain, part frise on woolen grounds.

Many of the stripes show blocks at intervals, and this treatment of woolen stuffs gives richness to them. Raye Pompadour is a good example, also the Quille Pompadour panels, which cost nearly five dollars a yard.

In all these fabrics the favorite colorings are browns, reds, drabs, heliotrope, pink prune, mousse, salmon and tabac; the lighter and more delicate shades show up the patterns in a marvellous way.

The velvet checks intermixed with Gothic patterns on twilled grounds are also costly. These are made up with plain stuff to match, with Velours Victoria, which has silk stripes, frise in the centre. Velours Plumetis is of most feathery aspect, with checks on a silk ground, intermixed with frise.

Voile, the thinnest make of woolen stuff, has been brought out with large silk checks, which give it more substance. Some of the prettiest have beige grounds, with floral chintz patterns between the stripes; and there are a number of washing voiles just the same patterns as the new cottons. They last clean longer, but are much more costly.

Odds and Ends.

SOME GERMAN RECIPES.

Apple Soup.—Peel one quart of good apples, core and cut them in quarters, put them in a saucepan with one quart of water, the grated rind of a lemon, a little sugar, cinnamon, a few blanched almonds pounded fine, and a wineglassful of claret; boil till the apples are quite soft, then thicken the mixture, with a little potato or rice flower. Boil the apple parings also in a little water, strain through a sieve into the soup, mix well together, sprinkle a little sugar and cinnamon over it, and serve very hot, with rusks or strips of thin toast.

Beer Soup.—Pour two bottles of beer into a saucepan, and as soon as it commences to boil, skim off a little of the froth, then add some brown sugar to taste, and the rind of a lemon and a little cinnamon. Make a few slices of toast, cut them into strips, and put them into the bottom of the soup tureen; pour the soup over them.

Mock Chocolate Soup.—Brown four tablespoonfuls of flour in the oven, add to it a tablespoonful of sugar, a little cinnamon and a clove or two; put in saucepan with a pint of boiling milk, then stir the mixture until it boils up again, taking care that it does not become lumpy; serve very hot with strips of toast. If liked, the whites of two eggs may be beaten to a thick froth, and dropped from a teaspoon into the boiling soup a minute or two before serving.

Fish Soup.—Clean and wash three pounds of any white fish, free it from bones, and cut it into small pieces, lay it in a saucepan with some slices of onion, a little celery, a cut-up carrot, a few breadcrumbs, salt, pepper, two cloves, and, if liked, a little nutmeg, and a quarter pound of butter. Let it steam until it looks of a darkish yellow color, then fill up the saucepan with water, and boil gently for two hours, strain through a colander, add a small lump of butter, let it boil up once more, stirring it well, and serve with fried bread.

Stuffed Potatoes.—Choose some large potatoes, peel them, cut a small piece off the top of each, and scoop them out carefully with a knife and fill them with sausage meat; replace the top pieces. Grease a baking pan with butter, and lay the potatoes side by side in it, with a little lump of butter between each; bake them in a hot oven.

Potatoes and Egg.—Put a lump of butter into a frying pan, when it boils, brown in it a finely chopped small onion. Cut some cold boiled potatoes into slices, put them in the pan, pour over them the well-beaten yolks of two eggs, seasoned with pepper and salt; fry a nice golden brown on both sides.

Potato Cake.—Separate the yolks and whites of nine eggs, beat the yolks well, then add to them gradually 1 lb. of castor sugar, 2 oz. sweet and 2 oz. bitter almonds, previously blanched and pounded, 1¼ lb. of grated raw potatoes, the grated rinds of lemon, and the juice of half a lemon, and a little powdered cinnamon. Whisk the whites of the nine eggs to a stiff froth, and add them to the mixture, beating well all the time. Butter a mould, fill it three parts full with the mixture, put it at once into a hot oven, and bake for one hour.

Chocolate Cakes with Almonds.—Grate ¼ lb. of chocolate and mix with it ½ lb. of pounded almonds, 2 oz. castor sugar, 1 oz. of powdered cinnamon; beat the whites of six eggs to a stiff froth, and add them to the mixture, then drop in little heaps from a teaspoon on a buttered tin, and bake in a moderate oven.

Chocolate Cakes.—Grate 8 oz. of chocolate, mix with it 4 oz. of finely sieved flour, 12 oz. castor sugar; whisk the whites of five eggs to a stiff froth, and beat it well with the chocolate, flour and sugar; drop as in above recipe.

Chocolate Souffle.—Put 10 oz. of groats into a pint of milk, pour it into a saucepan, and stir it well until it boils, then mix with it ¼ oz. of cinnamon, 6 oz. grated chocolate, and 4 oz. of butter; stir the mixture well, and let it boil up once more, set it aside to cool, then add to it gradually the well-beaten yolks and the well-whisked whites of five eggs, put it into a mould or cake tin, and then bake in a moderate oven.

Chaudeau Pudding.—Beat the yolks of twelve eggs with ½ lb. of castor sugar for fifteen minutes, or until they froth, add to them the grated rind and juice of a small lemon, and ½ lb. fine flour, mix well together, whisk the whites of six eggs to a stiff froth, and add it gradually to the mixture, beating well all the time, pour it into a buttered mould, and boil for one hour and a half. Serve with wine sauce.

Red Currant Cream.—Squeeze 2 lb. of red currants through a cloth or hair sieve, mix with it ¼ lb. of sugar, and the rind of a lemon rubbed on the sugar; beat up twelve eggs, add them to the currant juice, pour the mixture into a saucepan, and boil over a slow fire, stirring all the time; put it into a mould or glass dish, and serve cold. A glass of white wine added to the mixture before boiling, is a great improvement.

Vanilla Sauce.—Stir smoothly a tablespoonful of flour into half a pint of cold milk, sweeten it to taste; add a piece of cinnamon, a small stick of vanilla, and the well-beaten yolks of two eggs; pour the custard into a saucepan, and stir it well over a moderate fire until it thickens.

One of the callers at the President's reception on Monday is said to have presented his wife with the remark: "Mr. President, this is Merandy. My other two wives met Hayes and Garfield, and I had to fetch her to keep peace in the family. Being a married man you know how it is yourself!" It is added that Mr. Cleveland, though moved to a good natured laugh, declined to commit himself.

A horse in Edinburgh, Scotland, dexterously catches rats that come anywhere near his manger.

Confidential Correspondents.

D. J. S.—The act "to restrict the ownership of real estate in the territories to American citizens" is to prevent the growth of a foreign landlord system in this country.

Student.—No person can tell another how to engrave or etch by means of acids. That is an art which has to be learned by much study and practice. You might as well ask to be told how to make a shoe or how to paint a picture.

Fair.—You cannot remove moles from the face without great danger to the skin, and in all probability you will find the remedy worse than the disease. Freckles, being only surface spots, may be removed or obliterated, but a mole lies deeper.

Pater.—The maxim, "The greater the truth, the greater the libel," arose from the principle that a libel should be held criminal because liable to provoke a breach of the peace, and that the greater its truth the greater was the possibility of a disturbance. Now, however, truth is the justification for publishing news of interest to the public without malicious intent.

W. L. C.—You can use the first or third finger of the left hand as the engagement finger. If you choose a stone engagement ring the first finger, but if a plain gold ring, the third—the wedding finger—is appropriate. We advise a plain gold ring. It is always in good taste, and nine sensible women out of ten prefer it. Should it go that far, economy, wisdom, and romance should make the same ring serve as the wedding ring.

Frans.—The letters I. N. R. I. stand for the words "Jesus Nazarenus Rex Judæorum," the Latin equivalent for "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews," which Pilate caused to be inscribed above the cross upon which Jesus was crucified. "I" and "J" were formerly regarded as the same letter. 2. "James" is said to be the same name as "Jacob," which means a "supplanter." 3. The line you quote means that any manifestation of natural emotion makes all men feel their common humanity.

Engineer.—It would, of course, be the duty of the engineer to do all he could to prevent an accident. But if, after doing his best to stop the train, a collision occurred, we do not think the company could be held responsible for the resulting damages. A man who sees a train coming, and attempts to cross the line, must himself take the consequences of his own misjudgment as to time, and also of any accident that may happen to his horses to prevent him getting out of the locomotive's way.

Lizzy.—"Where the bee sucks honey, the spider sucks poison," is an old adage which is used to teach that good people find good in the same things in which bad people find evil. There are many such adages, which are not scientifically accurate, but only true in a metaphorical sense. There is also an old adage that "henbane draws poison from the same soil from which the rose draws perfume;" that is used to express the same idea as to some people getting evil out of what other people get good.

Mixed.—The word antecedent comes from two Latin words that mean "going before," and that is just what antecedent means. The antecedent of a pronoun is a word, clause, or phrase going before it, and which the pronoun coming after it represents. For example, in the sentence, "Martha dislikes her grammar lessons," Martha goes before, and thus is the antecedent of the pronoun her, which pronoun represents Martha. If we had no pronouns, we should have to say, "Martha dislikes Martha's grammar lessons," but having a pronoun her, we put it in the sentence in place of "Martha's," and hence her represents its antecedent Martha.

Deborah.—The young man, in referring to the spitefulness of "the creature after which you are named," alluded to the bee. Deborah is Hebrew for bee, and Melissa comes from the Greek, and is the name of that insect in the Greek language. You need not be ashamed of the derivation of your name. The bee is a thoroughly respectable "creature," to use the theological student's word. It is industrious and useful, and seldom shows ill-temper unless it is disturbed. It is a symbol of wisdom and prosperity; and any girl who is as industrious, economical, orderly, and sensible as a bee, will be apt to make a good wife and prolong the honeymoon indefinitely.

Deaf.—We know that stale words of commonplace comfort are cheap, and we shall not use any. But remember this very remarkable thing—the most charming of people have been deaf. Do not imagine that your affliction is any bar to your being loved and admired. Lord Granville, one of the most delightful of talkers, is very deaf. Harriet Martineau, who was beloved by all that was best in society, always used an ear-trumpet. By-the-way, why do you not try one? Talleyrand grew very deaf, but his charm never decreased. That good and most pleasant man Sir Joshua Reynolds was very deaf, but he held his own in the most brilliant company of talkers that ever met together. And now we are going to tell you something very shocking—Miss Martineau relieved her deafness by smoking cigars!

A. C. F.—There are men who flirt with women, make love to them, gain their affections, then break their hearts, and go away to marry somebody else. And there are men who persecute lonely women without a protector. They seem determined to win the hand of a woman who does not love them, and sometimes they even murder that woman because she will not accept their attention; or they follow her up, and make her life a misery to every man who might marry her; and all this is done to bring her into subjection to some man's will that she has never cared for, and has always said so. She has been robbed and cheated, deprived of friends and home, and all to minister to that person's vanity and self-conceit. These are not the days of Catherine and Petruchio. A man should not be allowed to domineer over a woman without her consent.

M. F. N.—There seem to be some grounds for a "grievance" in the case which you state. Perhaps when the young man see the view which you and your young lady friends take of their visits to your homes, they will either exhibit a generous reciprocity or else cease calling on you altogether. Some young men are so conceited that they think the young ladies like to have them call; that, in fact, the young ladies look upon their calls as actual favors, and that they (the young men) are under no obligation whatever to recompense their charming hostesses for accepting such social attentions. It would doubtless do such conceited persons good to have a little of their conceit on this subject taken out of them. It might make better young men of them, if they were gently and smoothly given to understand that the reception of their attention by the young ladies on whom they call is a matter of favor, and must be reciprocated by invitations to concerts, or other public entertainments.